

God's Goodness

Thomas  
Ex Don.

TO HIS

Gulbath  
Rev. Mr. Sullivan

# ISRAEL

In All Ages.

Being the Substance of some

## SERMONS,

ON

PSALM Lxxiii. 1.

Truly God is good to Israel, even to such  
are of a clean heart;

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By J. F. Minister of the Gospel.  
By J. Forbes Minis: of ye Gosp. at

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By the Ministry of the Gospel

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# God's Goodness

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### In all Ages.

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Psalm LXXIII. 1.

*Truly God is good to Israel, and to such as are of a clean heart.*

**T**HEY that will be at pains to peruse the Psalm throughout, will easily perceive under what a sad temptation the Psalmist (whether *Asaph* or *David*, is not material) had been at this time, having observed how wicked prospered, and what miseries the godly undergo; he did begin to conclude that it were a great matter whether he followed the ways of godliness any more; or whether he turned Profane and Atheistical: v. 2, 3. *As for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; for I was envious at the foolish; when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* v. 13, 14. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long*

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have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. While thus he was conflicting with the temptation, the Lord directed him to the use of a blessed means, whereby he came to be better instructed; *He went into the sanctuary* (i. e. he consulted the Oracles of God, he searched the Records of Heaven, the Holy Scriptures, he was diligent in the practice of all duties of Temple-worship, then in use; he consulted with God and his Spirit, and Jesus Christ, the Sanctuary was the Type and he the Antitype) and then he could say, *Surely thou hast set them in slippery places; thou castest them down into destruction: how are they brought into desolation, as in a moment? they are utterly consumed with terrors, as a dream, when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, shalt thou despise their image.* Having now overcome the temptation, he pens this Psalm, an excellent Prospective Glass for the Church and People of God in all ages; wherein they may see, 1. The variety and wonderfulness of the Dispensations of Gods Providence towards his Creatures. 2. That its common and ordinary, for wicked men, to have worldly prosperity. 3. That sometimes, as to outward things, Saints are of all men the most miserable; so 1 Cor. 15. to the end, *Psal. 22. We are accounted all day long as sheep for the slaughter.* 4. That they that are most spiritual, are able to temptations, and in a readiness to comply therewith, and therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. 5. One of the best means under heaven to get victory over a temptation, is to go into the Sanctuary, taking it in the fore-mentioned sense. Lastly, Tempted ones taking this course to wait upon God, in the use of appointed means, have sometime or other a glorious issue; and not only so; but they prove the most choice and excellent, the most humble and lowly,

ly, the most affectionate and loving, the me-  
 Christ excelling and Soul edifying Christians; the  
 improve their temptations, their Exercises unde-  
 them, and their issues out of them to some purpose  
 for the glory of God; the good of their own souls,  
 and the spiritual advantage of others. This im-  
 provement the Psalmist made, is worthy of our ob-  
 servation. 1. He is now able with a holy assevera-  
 tion to attest to this truth which he did so unbelie-  
 vingly question, *Truly God is good to Israel.* 2. He  
 bemoans his brutishness, stupidity, and atheistical  
 ignorance, v. 22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was  
 as a beast before thee.* 3. He did attribute his preser-  
 vation from yielding to temptation, to the divine  
 supports of the free grace of God only; v. 23. *Ne-  
 vertheless thou art continually with me, thou hast holden  
 me by thy right hand.* 4. By the mercy received,  
 he is engaged to act a fiducial dependance upon  
 God as long as he lives; v. 24. *Thou shalt guide me  
 with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*  
 5. He has more sublimated, raised, and elevated  
 affections than ever; v. 25. *Whom have I in heaven  
 but thee, there is none in all the earth I desire besides  
 thee.* Lastly, He is fully grounded, settled, and  
 established in this truth, that let the wicked pro-  
 sper a thousand times over, yet wo shall be to them  
 in conclusion, v. 27. *For lo they that are from thee,  
 shall perish, thou hast destroyed (it's as sure as if thou  
 hadst already done it) all them that go a whoring  
 from thee: and on the contrary, the frowns of Pro-  
 vidence on Gods people, shall never make him  
 put off love with holiness: I shall still say, It is good  
 for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the  
 Lord, that I may declare all thy works.*

## God's Goodness to his Israel

Thus you see how the scope of the whole Psalm does so much conduce to the clearing of what is contained in the first verse, *Truly God is good to Israel*. Some read the first word, *Although*, or, *Yet surely*, i. e. Though once I was under a strong temptation, the Devil and my own carnal heart, would have perswaded me that God did not care for his people: Notwithstanding that to sense and reason, providences do often speak forth the happiness of the wicked, and the godlies miseries; though this be the Opinion of the vulgar and common sort of people, yet now I can set my seal to this truth, *God is good to Israel*, with a *surely*, a *truly*, a *verily*. In the words there are these two things that need explication; 1. Who are the *Israel* here spoken of. 2. What we are to understand by those that *are of a clean heart*.

For the first, *Israel* was that Name which God gave unto *Jacob* after he had wrestled with the angel and prevailed; Gen. 32. 28. *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*; Hof. 12. 13. The reason of the change of Name was no doubt for honours sake. Sometimes it signifies all the posterity of *Jacob*, Isa. 48. 1. *Hear this O house of Jacob, which art called by the name of Israel*, Rom. 9. 4. 2 Cor. 11. 23. Phil. 3. 5. Sometimes for the Church under the Old Testament, consisting of the posterity of *Jacob*, and Gentile Profelytes; Psal. 68. 35. *The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his people*; and 125. last. Joh. 1. 49. Rom. 9. 6. For the Christian Church under the New Testament converted to the faith of Christ, Gal. 6. 16. 1 Cor. 10. 18. *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is out-*

ward in the flesh: but he is a few, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God: Rom. 2. 28, 29. When this Psalm was first penned, by Israel here spoken of, the Old Testament Church were principally understood, but in our treating of this Subject, we are not to restrict it to them only.

2. That we may the better know who those of a clean heart are, this distinction is necessary:

1. There is a Legal cleanness of heart, which is a perfect and compleat purity, according to what the Law requires. 2. There is an Evangelical or Gospel cleanness of heart, which is, 1. A godly sorrow and humiliation from heart-uncleanness. 2. A holy detestation, hatred, and abhorrence of every sin. 3. A constant endeavour every day more and more to be rid of sin. 4. A sincere cordial love to holiness and heart purity. 5. A fervent and earnest praying with David, Psal. 51. *Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.* 6. An unfeigned faith, whereby a humbled soul, does notwithstanding of the guilt and filth of sin, lay hold on Christ for Justification and Sanctification. It's of this later and not the former, the assertion in the Text is verified; Psal. 32. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven, and whose transgression is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guil.*

By this time you may perceive that my Text points at these three things: 1. The goodness of God here mentioned, is not that common providential bounty whereof the whole Creation are made partakers, but the specialies of Gods love and favour. 2. Though there are many titular Christians



Christians that go under the name of Church-members, Saints, and Professors, yet the specialty of Love, is the peculiar privilege and portion of upright-hearted ones only. 3. It is a most infallible, certain, and undoubted truth, that God is good to his Church and people, especially such as are sincere souls amongst them. O how sweet is it to speak of this goodness of God, but how much more sweet to taste of it: O its sweet to know it, but much more sweet to feel it experimentally, and to have a lively sense of his goodness to my own soul in particular.

For the opening of this more fully, I shall propose this method, 1. Give some few Scripture-proofs of this truth, God is good to his people. 2. Some demonstrations thereof, from what has been common to his people in all ages. 3. From some particular blessings bestowed upon the Jews under the Old Testament. 4. What the goodness of God was to the Gospel-Church, as in contradiction to the Jews. 5. What were the peculiar blessings of God to the Primitive Church, in Christ and the Apostles days. 6. Wherein the goodness of God appeared to the Church for the first Three hundred years after the death of Christ and his Apostles. 7. What from the first rise of Antichrist, till he came to his full height, and during his reign. 8. What the good-providence of God is like to be from the first remarkable beginning of Antichrists ruin, to the time and period of his utter destruction, from the beginning of the work of Reformation, to the end of the World.

Here's Work enough carved out for me to speak, and you to hear of; we may well say, Who is sufficient for these things? We might be greatly discouraged, even at our first entrance upon it, were it



not for this one thing, That God with whom we have to do, and whose work we are about, is of infinite goodness, grace, mercy, love, and bounty, abundant in goodness and truth; *he giveth liberally, and upbraideth no man*, Jam. 1. 5.

First, For Scripture proofs take these few instead of many, *Psal. 31. 19. O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the eyes of men!* Zech. 3. last ver. *Psal. 103. 11, 12, 13. 15, 16, 17, &c. Psal. 107.* this is four or five times reiterated, *O that men would praise the Lord, for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men*; and *Psal. 136.* this is 26 times repeated, *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever.* and 145. 7, 8, 9. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness; and shall sing of thy righteousness; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy; the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Secondly, The consideration of such blessings as are common to the upright hearted ones in all ages, is a farther demonstration of this truth, and they are these: 1. There's none of them, but it was upon the heart of God to do them good before the foundation of the world; *Eph. 1. 4, 5, 6. 2 Tim. 1. 9.* 2. That unspeakable and unparalleld mercy of God in promising and sending his dear Son to work redemption for his people, is a confirmation of this. *Joh. 3 16. God so loved the world* — 3. There's none of Gods peculiar ones, but in due time have been effectually called from darkness to light; he takes the heirs of hell, wrath, and damnation, and adopts them for his own children; *1 Joh. 3. 1.* Be- hold what manner of love and goodness this is. Pardon of sin is that that all the people of God have

have been partakers of; *Micah 7. 18.* O who is a God like unto our God, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage! *Isa. 43. 25. Ezek. 36. 22.* 5. All such have had the soul-saving and sanctifying graces of the Spirit bestowed upon them; *2 Pet. 1. 4.* 6. They have had Ordinances and means, whereby grace and all spiritual blessings may be communicated to them; *Psal. 147. 19, 20.* He sheweth his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any Nation — 7. Whatever blessings they have, all is by the tenure of a Covenant of Grace; *2 Cor. 1. 20.* All promises are Yea and Amen in Christ to them that believe. O the never-enough-admired goodness of this God, that has condescended so far, as by a voluntary Contract and Covenant to make himself a Debtor to such undeserving wretches! *Psal. 34. 3.* O come let us magnify the goodness of the Lord together! 8. God is so good that he has in all ages furnished his people with what he knew to be most convenient for them; the light of his countenance was best for them, that they had; if the joys and consolations of the Holy Ghost, if the hidings of his face — if poverties, if aches, if Ordinances, or if sometimes the want of Ordinances, was good for them; if persecution or deliverance from it — He has sanctified every state and condition, making all things work for their good; *Rom. 8. 28.* in one word, *Psal. 84. 11.* The Lord is a Sun and a Shield, he giveth grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly: and *37. 37.* Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, behold the end of that man is peace. *Isa. 64. 4. Psal. 40. 12.* Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works, which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are so unward; they cannot be reckoned

up in order before thee, if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

*Thirdly,* The consideration of the eminent acts of God's gracious Providence towards the Church of the Jews, under the Old Testament, is a proof of this truth; some few whereof are these. 1. Of all Nations under Heaven them only he separated, to be a holy People for himself. Deut. 7. 6, 7, 8. *Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people for himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth; the Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because ye were more in number than any other people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loveth you.*

2. That *Ægyptian Deliverance*, so miraculously wrought for them, was an eminent act of God's good Providence to them, and that in these respects. 1. He furnished them with a General every way fit for that Expedition, Ps. 105. 26. *He sent Moses his servant and Aaron whom he had chosen.* 2. He inflicted ten several tremendous Plagues and fearful Judgments on their persecuting and oppressive Enemies, because they would not allow them liberty to worship God according to the Command of God and their own Consciences. Ps. 105. 27. That of the cutting off all the First-Born of their Adversaries in one night, when the destroying Angel pass'd over them, is memorable; as also their being in *Goshen*, a Land of Light for three days together, when the other were in Darknes. 3. In spite of all Opposers, they had one very glorious Sacramental Passover-day, before they were

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brought forth. 4. He did greatly enrich them with Ear-rings and Jewels of their cruel Task-masters, *Exod. 22. 36.* 5. While they were surrounded with the Red Sea, on the one hand, and Pharaoh's Army on the other, you know what great Salvation he wrought for them. *Exod. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* *O sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.*

3. The many signal passages of his Providence towards them in the Wilderness, do demonstrate this Truth, Truly God is good to Israel. 1. He sweetned the bitter Waters of Marah for them, *Exod. 15. 23, 24, 25.* 2. He Rained Manna from Heaven upon them, and gave them Quails to eat, even when in a pettish murmuring Humour, they said unto Moses and Aaron, would to God we had Died by the Hand of the Lord in the Land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-Pots, and when we did eat Bread to the full, for ye have brought us forth into the Wilderness to kill the whole Assembly with Hunger. 3. When they Thirsted and had no Drink, *He opened the Rock, and the Waters gushed out, they ran in the dry places like a River, Psal. 105. 41.* 4. Through the prevalence of Moses's Prayer, they obtained a glorious Victory over the Amalekites, Aaron and Hur, holding up his Hands, for which an Altar was erected to the Lord as an eternal Monument of that Mercy, *Exod. 17. end.* 5. They had the Pillar of the Cloud by Day to keep them from the violence and scorching Heat of the Sun, and the Pillar of Fire by Night to shelter them from the cold thereof, and to lead them on their way in the Dark, *Pf.*

105. 39. 6. They had the Law in a most solemn way and manner given forth from Mount *Sinai*, *Exod.* 20. O happy is that People that's under a Theocracy, and who are governed only by that Law which is purely Divine: The Law Moral, did in a general way teach them their Duty both to God and Man. The Ceremonial did teach them more particularly what to give unto God, and the judicial Law did inform them how they ought to walk one towards another as Members of such a Body Politick, Nation, Kingdom, or Commonwealth. 7. The Lord did institute Tabernacle-Worship first in the Wilderness: Better be in the Wilderness with God's Ordinances, than in *Egypt* without them. 8. When they proved Idolatrous in erecting a Molten Calf, to be a visible representation of God's marching on before them, upon their Repentance and *Moses's* Prayer, God was graciously pleased to pardon their Sin, *Exod.* 32, 11, 12, 13, 14. 9. All that Forty Years they were in the Wilderness, they had no need to renew their Shoes nor Garments. 10. When they were stung with fiery Serpents, they had a brazen Serpent erected, as an Ordinance of divine Institution for their Remedy and Cure, *Numb.* 21. 9. Lastly, Most of all these things, their Manna, Water out of the Rock, Tabernacles, high Priest, Ark, Sacrifices, Altars, Pillar of the Cloud, and Fire, and the brazen Serpent, were Typical representations of Jesus Christ, and visible Signs of his Presence amongst them. I was lately very much taken with the Reading of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Chapters of *Numbers*, where after numbring the Children of *Israel*, they are Ranked



in Battalia as a Camp; in the midst of this Camp was the Tabernacle, with the Ark of the Covenant; next unto it the Priests and Levites, and round about them, the rest of the Tribes; when the Priests and Levites stood with the Ark, the People stood, when the Ark moved and marched on, they accordingly followed; and what did all this signifie? But that they were even in the Wilderness, under the conduct of their great Captain-General Jesus Christ, Deut. 32. 11, 12, 13. *As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, and fluttereth over her Young, spreadeth abroad her wings. So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him, he made him ride on high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey out of the Rock, and oyl out of the flinty rock.* Gen. 32. 34. Behold mine Angel shall go before thee; it was in Allusion to this marching Posture of theirs, that the Psalmist breaks forth, *Psal. 46. Though the Mountains be removed, the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. And Cant. 6. 16. Who is she that looketh forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, terrible as an Army with banners.*

Time would fail in telling you what God did in dividing *Jordan*, in possessing them with a Land that did flow with Milk and Honey, in distributing to every Tribe their Portion and Inheritance, by lot, in driving out their Enemies, the *Ammonites, Moabites, the Hivites, Jebusites and Gargasites*, what shall I tell you of his raising up *Deborah and Barak*, Gide-



*Gideon, Sampson, Ely, Samuel* and others endued with an extraordinary Spirit, to be not only Princes and Judges over them, but also to rescue them out of the Hands of their Enemies, to whom their Sins had enslaved them, what shall I tell you of all the gracious acts of favour conferred upon them under the good Kings, *David, Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah*? O how good was God to them, even in *Babylon*: How many of them were kept faithful in the worst times, he sent extraordinary Prophets to Preach Repentance to them after they had revolted. *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* were commissioned to prophesy their deliverance from the Babylonish Captivity, *Daniel* prayed for it. O how miraculously were they preserved from *Haman's* bloody Conspiracy and intended Massacre, in *Esther* and *Mordecai's* time. O how they were preserved in *Daniel's* time, notwithstanding of that tyrannical Edict and Decree, That whosoever would not fall down before their abominable idolatrous Image, should be thrown into the Fiery Furnace, O the goodness of God to them in stirring up the Spirit of *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* for rebuilding the Temple. O the goodness of God, in raising *Cyrus* to be so favourable to them, as to grant their desire, and give them all due Encouragement to go on in the Work of the Lord. If I should proceed to particulars here, I should not know where to make an end: The providences of God to them in *Agypt* may be known from the 15th Chap. of *Exod.* the 78, 105, and 106. *Psalms* with the 7th Chap. of the *Acts*. If you would know God's goodness to them under the Judges and Kings, Read

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*Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*: It while in *Babylon*, Read *Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah*: after the deliverance Read the Books commonly called Apocrypha, to which we may give an Historical Faith, as to any other Histories. O how gloriously good was God in raising up *Judas Maccabeus* to rescue his Brethren and People from the cruel Tyranny of *Antiochus Epiphanes*. A short Epitome and Summary Recapitulation of all you have, *Rom. 9. 4, 5*. Who are *Israelites* to whom pertaineth the Adoption, they were the only Children of God, and the Glory, *i. e.* either all that Glory whereby God exalted them above others in respect of many miraculous Deliverances, or the Ark of the Covenant so called, *1 Sam. 4. 21, 22*. Because the Cherubims of Glory covered it, as also it was a Shadow and Figure of the Divine Glory and Majesty of God, *Psal. 26. 8, Heb. 9. 5*. And the Covenants, *i. e.* the Tables of the Law, *Deut. 9. 11. Heb. 9. 4*. And the Lawgiving, *i. e.* the judicial Law, the former being understood of the Moral; and the Service of God, *i. e.* his Worship which was first Preached in the Tabernacle, afterwards in *Solomon's Temple*, and the promises, to wit of sending the Messiah, and with him all other Blessings and Benefits, *Acts 2. 39. Eph. 2. 12*. whose are the Fathers, *i. e.* they were descended of the Patriarchs, and the Fathers are of them, and of whom Christ is for as much as concern the Flesh, who is God over all, Blessed for ever, Amen.

Before I proceed, I would have you make this use of what has been said. 1. Was God so good to his People of Old? And is not he  
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the same still, Yesterday, to Day, and for evermore? Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed as well as they, *Psal.* 37. 3. The Mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. 2. When the Lord's peculiar ones provoked him with their Sins, they were not privileged with an exemption from Punishments, as we may see at this Day: Let us learn to stand in awe, and fear to offend. This very use the Apostle *Paul* makes of this point, *Rom.* II. 20, 21, 22, 23. *Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith: Be not high minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee: Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God on them which fell, severity, but towards thee, goodness if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

Fourthly, God's goodness to his Gospel-Church far exceeds his goodness to them of old. 1. Gospel-Converts are far more numerous than formerly; the *Jews* and their *Profelytes* were but very few in comparison of all the rest of the World then, and of Gospel-Converts now. For now there are *Thousands in Germany, Thousands in France, Thousands in Britaine, Netherlands.* 2. Christ himself is now actually come, Dead, Risen, Ascended and Glorified, and therefore the Glory of the latter House, is greater than that of the former, *Hag.* 2. 9. They were promised that he should come, and were accordingly to believe on him, which made honest *Abraham* so to rejoyce in seeing his Day, though but a far off. O how good is the Lord then to us, whose lot is fallen under this

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this dispensation of Grace, where we may clearly discern, that the work of reconciliation between God and us, is perfectly accomplished, Divine Justice is satisfied to the full, and all our Enemies so far conquered, that they cannot in the least injure us. 3. God hath delivered us from the Ceremonies of *Moses's* Law; a Yoke that neither they nor their Fathers were well able to bear, *Acts* 15. 10. Their Ceremonies were so many, and each of them significant, that it was a great burden to their Memories to remember all: They were also very costly and chargeable, they must kill many Lambs, Goats, Bullocks, keep several solemn Festivals, and all at *Jerusalem*, but now the goodness of God to us is in this, that he does not put us upon any such tedious Journies, he does not require such chargeable Sacrifices of us, nor so limit his Worship to any one place, but it is as acceptable in one as another, *John* 4. 24, 25. 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. Deliverance from the Ceremonial Law, is an act of favour to us; upon this account also, that it was a Wall of separation, in a visible way to distinguish between the *Jews* and us, to signify that they were the People of God and we not, *Ephes.* 2. 14. *Colos.* 2. 14. 4. Their Ordinances were comparatively carnal, *Heb.* 9. 10. Which stood only in Meats and Drinks and Washings, and were imposed on them till the time of Reformation; ours are far more Spiritual; they had many Sacraments, to wit Manna, the Rock, the Pillar of the Cloud; brazen Serpent, Circumcision, and the paschal Lamb, instead of all these, we have only Baptism and the Lord's Supper. 5. Though the Covenant, under which they were

were, and we are, be the same for substance, yet in respect of the diversity of administration, our mercy far exceeds theirs. 1. Their Covenant was in a more legal strain than ours, *Rom. 10. 5, 6.* *Moses* describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, *That the Man which doth these things shall live by them, but the Righteousness which is of Faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine Heart who shall ascend—the word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thine Heart, that if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.* 2. Their's was administred by the Hands of *Moses*, a typical Mediator only; ours by *Christ* himself, *Gal. 3. 19.* *Heb. 1. 1, 2.* *God* who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoke unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. 3. The dispensation they were under, was full of Dread, Horrour and Terror, *Gal. 4. end.* *Heb. 12.* When the Law was given forth from *Sinai*, the Mount was all in a Fire, to point at the hot burning Wrath they might look for, in case they were found transgressors; ur's from Mount *Sion*, is full of Meekness, Gentleness, Mercy and Love. *St. John, If ye love me keep my Commandments.* 4. The promises of our Covenant are better than theirs; if they did observe the Statutes and Ordinances of God, they might warrantably expect to be blest in their Basket and Store, and such other temporal things, according to *Deut. 28.* But now though we

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cannot by vertue of a promise expect Blessings of this kind upon our observation of Divine Precepts, but rather the contrary, *Matth. 10. Whoever will be my Disciple must deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me.* And *Acts 4.* Through manifold Temptations or Tribulations, we must all enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And *1 Tim. 2. 12.* All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution; yet we may expect Spiritual Blessings, and that in a greater measure than they. 1. We are promised greater plenty of Spiritual Knowledge than they. That of *Isa. 11. 9.* relates to gospel-Times. *The Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.* And *35. 5.* Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. And *32. 3, 4.* And *42. 16.* I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will lead them in paths they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things strait. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. *2 Cor. 3. 15, 16, 18.* And *4. 3.* The Preaching of the Gospel is not Darkened with Types, Figures and Ceremonies as in the Days of old. 2. Spiritual Fruitfulness is promised to us, *Matth 21. 41.* The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you Jews, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof. *Isa. 35. 7, 8.* In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land Springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be reeds and rushes. 3. Spiritual peace, joy and comfort is promised to our Days, *Isa. 32.*



17. The Work of Righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of Righteousness quietness and assurance for ever, Rom. 5. Begin: Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom also we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand and rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God, and not only so, but we Glory in Tribulation also, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope; and Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad into our Hearts by the holy Ghost. 1 Pet. 1. In whom believing ye rejoyce with a joy unspeakable and full of Glory. 4. We have the promise of the Spirit more than they, Joel 2. 28. I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh. Acts 2. 17. Isa. 44. 3. O how good is the Lord to us in this respect, if we are not wanting to our selves through unbelief; the dispensation under which we are, promises the pourings forth of the Spirit to us, O! who are we that we should be thus dealt by?

Let's make some use of what has been said as to this head, and so I go on.

1. Let Men and Angels be summoned in to admire and adore, let our Souls and all that's within us, Extoll and Magnifie the rich Grace and Goodness of this God, that has cast off his Ancient People, and has taken us gentile sinners, who were Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant, and made us heirs of the promises, Rom. 11. 17. O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments and his Ways

## God's Goodness to his Israel

past finding out! O what are we poor wild Olives, that we should be grafted in amongst the Natural Branches, and partake of the fatness of the Olives! O blessed are your Eyes and Ears which see and hear such things as were denyed many of the Fathers! See *Rom. 11. Ephes. 3. 8, 9, 10. Acts 28. end.* O how good is this God that has invested every particular Church of gentile Believers, with greater privileges than their National Church had, and private Christians are in some respects privileged beyond their Church Officers, *Rev. 1. 4.* He hath made us Kings and Priests to God, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving to him through Christ.

2. Study to walk worthy of this goodness of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, *Col. 1.* Let every Soul say, O what shall I render to the Lord. 1. Take heed thou dost not live in any the least Sin; beware of Ignorance; if any thing prove the Condemnation of the World, it will be this, *That light is come, and they delight in darkness more than in light,* *John 3. 19.* We may now say, *2 Cor. 4. 3.* If our Gospel be hid, it's hid to them that Perish. beware of unbelief, *John 3. 18.* *He that believeth not on him, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* O beware of ingratitude, and turning Grace into Wantonness, *Jude 4.* There are certain Men who were before of old, ordained to Condemnation, ungodly Men turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness——Say rather *Rom. 6. 1.* *Shall I Sin because I am under Grace? God forbid.* 2. Think it not enough to abstain from Sin, and to have true Grace, but that

that your Graces may in some measure be answerable to the Covenant you are under; has God been pleased to make great promises, and wilt not thou labour for such a Faith as may apply these promises according to their full Latitude and extent? Has God now manifested the Riches of his Grace in reconciling the World to himself, through his Son, declaring also, that whosoever will believe on him shall be saved? And why art thou still in a doubting and questioning Condition? 3. Lay out your selves in glorifying this good God, especially in these two. 1. In a Gospel-Frame of Spirit, Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore as the Elect of God, dearly and beloved bowels of Mercies, kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, long-Suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another: If any Man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, and above all these things put on Charity, which is the Bond of perfection, and let the Peace of God Rule in your Hearts; to the which also ye were called in one Body and be ye thankful.* 2. In a Gospel-Conversation, Phil. 1. 27. Rom. 13. 12, 13, 14. *The Night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light, let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in strife and envying, not in Chambering and wantonness, but put ye on the Lord Jesus.* 4. Take all in good part that comes from the Hands of a good God. Learn Contentation with a suffering Condition, and a persecuted State: Live by Faith on the promises made to persons in such a Condition,

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John 16. 33. In the World ye shall have tribulation, but be of good chear, I have overcome the World. Mark 10. 29, 30. Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospels, but he shall receive an hundred-fold in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. Matth. 5. 10, 11. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. 1 Pet 4. 14. If ye are reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you, on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. And 16, 17, 18. If any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf, for the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God, wherefore let them that suffer according to the Will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. And 5. 10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make ye perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

2 Tim. 1. 12. For the Gospel of Christ I suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. And 2. 10, 11, 12. Therefore I endure all for the elects sake, that they may also obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Rom. 8. 17, 18, 35, 36. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. Lastly, Study a thankfull improvement of your privileges for all God's goodness towards you. 1. Seeing it cost Christ no less than his precious Blood to purchase a liberty for you, from the Mo-  
 faical Ceremonies, which were once of Divine Institution, and consequently much more from such as are of meer humane Institution, whether Heathenish or Antichristian, you ought not upon any pretence whatsoever, suffer your selves to be intangled again with that Yoak of Bondage: There's a great noise about the Churches Power to impose Ceremonies, *see* in matters indifferent; but I dare be bold to say, if there be such a thing in the World as Christian Liberty in any thing, it is not to be imposed upon in Ceremonies; and if any thing be a lording it over the Lord's heritage it is in not leaving those things indifferent which Christ hath left indifferent. Christian Liberty is not easily to be parted with, because it cost Christ so dear. 2. All that mediatory fulness of Grace and Spirit that's in Jesus Christ, is freely made over to us, let's therefore improve this privilege, so *as* every  
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moment upon all occasions to be still fetching supplies for our Soul-wants: From this overflowing Fountain, say thus, Lord, I want Wisdom, Faith, Patience, Power against Corruptions, Temptations, Enemies — *in my Flesh dwells no good thing*; but oh, is there not Goodness and Grace enough in thee; and is not this Goodness of thine communicable; *Out of thy Son's fulness let me receive grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16. 3. Through that new and living way, we have liberty of access to the throne of Grace. Let us accordingly improve this Privilege, in coming with a full assurance of Faith, to find grace and help in time of need: Let's come with a Child-like confidence; with a holy and humble boldness, *Heb. 2. end, and 4. end, and 10. 22, 23, 24.* 4. Through God's gracious Goodness, we are made joint-heirs with Christ, his Blessings, Benefits, Death and Intercession, are all ours; improve this Privilege to a deliverance from slavish fears. If Christ hath triumphed over Principalities and Powers, Sin and Satan, Death and the World, what is Man, O Gospel Saint, that thou art afraid of him; if he has purchased pardon of Sin, peace of Conscience, the Joys of the Holy Ghost, Grace here, and Heaven's Glory hereafter, thou need'st not fear that the Powers of Hell shall be able to deprive thee thereof.

*Fifthly*, God was very good to the primitive Church in the days of Christ and the Apostles, and that in these respects. 1. He did, as it were from Heaven, give an immediate Call and extraordinary Commission to *John Baptist* to be the Harbinger and Fore-runner of the Son of God and Saviour of the World. It was he that first



first brought into the World the good news of the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven, which did call aloud upon them to Repent, *Matth. 3. 2.* The aggravation of the Mercy was in the seasonableness of it, he was sent at such a time, when the Church was so deeply corrupted, that there was hardly the face of a visible Church to be seen upon them. See further of him, *Is. 40. 3. Mal. 4. 5, 6. Matth. 3. 7, 8, 9. Mark 1. 8. Luke 3. 16. Joh. 1. 26. Matth. 3. 11, 12. Matth. 11. 14. Luke 1. 15, 16, 17.*

2. The primitive Church was honour'd with Christ's own corporal Presence amongst them; hence they were called the Children of the Bridegroom; and it could not but be a day of rejoicing to them, to hear the Bridgroom's voice. *Joh. 3. 29. Mark 2. 19.* When that good Woman, *Elizabeth*, heard of the Salutation of *Mary*, the Babe leaped in her Womb, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. *Luke 1. 41.* *Mary* her self broke forth into a Doxology and Song of praises, which you may see *Luke 1. 46. to 55.* *Zacharias* also was filled with the Holy Ghost, and Prophesied, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people; he hath raised up a horn of Salvation for us in the house of David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the world began.* — The very Angels in Heaven thought it not too mean an Employment for them, to bring this Message to the Shepherds. *Luk. 2. 8, 9, 10.* *Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, verse 13, 14. And suddenly*  
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there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men: And that good old Man, Simeon, verse 28, 29. When he had seen the Child, Jesus, he took him up in his Arms, and blessed God, saying, Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation ----- a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Christ himself being come, they might now know, that God was a great Lover of Mankind; now they had an ample proof of his faithfulness, in making good what he had long before promised: Now they might be sure that Shadows would flee away, the Substance being come: Now they might be assured of the downfall of the Devil's Kingdom; witness the silencing the Oracles of *Jupiter*, *Apollo*, and *Hecate*; as also the locking up the Temple of *Janus*.

3. God's goodness to the primitive Church, was in furnishing them with Pastors according to his own Heart; the greatness of which Mercy may appear from the Consideration of these Circumstances. 1. The number of primitive Church-Officers was perfect and compleat for species and kind; there was none wanting which her Condition did then call for. Of extraordinary Officers there were Twelve Apostles, *Acts* 1. 1. Seventy Evangelists; particular Churches had their ordinary Officers, to wit, Bishops, *i. e.* Pastors and Teachers, to whom the Administration of Ordinances, and Oversight of the Flock was committed, Presbyters or Elders, who were to look to the Peo-  
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ples Manners, and Government of the Church, 1 *Tim.* 5. And Deacons, who were to take care of the Poor, *Acts* 6. *begin.* 2. There was then a parity and equality of all Officers in their kinds : Amongst the Apostles, none claimed a Superiority over the rest : *Peter's* Supremacy was then unknown ; as the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were given to him, *Matth.* 16. 19. so also to the rest, *Joh.* 20. 23. The very affectation of pre-eminence, was, in those days, distastful to Christ, *Matth.* 18. 1, 2, 3, 4. and 20. 25, 26. *Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, but it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant ; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* — And as it was distastful to Christ, so also to themselves. *Matth.* 20. 21, 22, 23, 24. *When the ten heard what the Mother of Zebedee's Children had asked for her two Sons, they were moved with indignation against them : And as one Apostle was not over the rest of the Apostles, so there was a parity between Bishops and Presbyters, i. e. ordinary Preaching and Ruling Officers or Elders ; they were not two distinct Offices nor Officers ; as may appear from *Act.* 20. 17. with 28. whom he had called Presbyters v. 17. he calls Bishops v. 28. 2. From *Philip.* 1. 1. he directs the Epistle to the Bishops and Deacons : *Philippi* being but a City, it cannot be imagin'd that there were Metropolitan or Diocesan Bishops, in the plural number, in it ; therefore the Bishops there spoken of, were on-*

ly ordinary Church Officers: This is the observation of *Chrysostome* on the Text. 3. From *Tit. 1. 5.* with 7. *For this cause left I thee in Crete to ordain Presbyters*; for a Bishop must be blameless — This *for* must either be a reason of what is in the preceding verse, or it signifies nothing; the qualifications required in both are the same, therefore they are not distinct Officers. 4. From *1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.* The Apostle exhorts the Presbyters to watch over their Flocks — *v. 5.* taking the oversight of them, ἐπισκοπῆντας, Bishoping it over them; The Work of both is the same, and therefore the Office is the same. 5. From *Ephes. 4. 11, 12.* where all sorts of Officers, both extraordinary and ordinary, are reckon'd; and if Lord Prelates be neither Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors, nor Teachers, They are none of Christ's Creatures, but of Humane Institution. 6. From *1 Tim. 3. 1.* to *v. 8.* begin. where the Apostle gives Rules for the Examination and Ordination of a Bishop, and then immediately he passes to the Office of a Deacon, without so much as mentioning any thing of a Presbyter; as taking it for granted, that Bishop and Presbyter were one and the same, the Rules for Examination and Ordination of both are the same. And thus you see God was good to the Primitive Church, in giving her such Officers, as did neither Lord it over one another, nor over the Lord's Heritage. A Third circumstance of this Mercy, was, the extent of the Apostolical Commission, *Matth. 28. Go Preach the Gospel to all the World*; whereas formerly it was confin'd within the compass of the Land of *Judea*; such is the goodness of God to the Sons of Men now, that he is not willing any

any should perish, but all should come to the knowledge of the Truth. See *Act.* 10. 28, 34. 35. *Mark* 16. 15. *Luke* 24. 47. *Act.* 1. 8. and 20. 21. *Rom.* 1. 4, 5. 4. He did furnish the Apostles with variety of eminent Gifts and Graces, suitable to their Work; they had such a Gift of Preaching, that they needed not Read or Study, but they spake by immediate Inspiration from the Holy Ghost, *Gal.* 1. 11, 12. *Eph.* 3. 3. At one of their Sermons three Thousand were Converted, *Act.* 2. 41. At another five Thousand, *Act.* 4. 4. They had a Spirit of Prayer, they needed not a Book to read a Prayer by a set form: They had the Gift of working Miracles, *Matth.* 10. 8. By laying on of hands they could confer the gift of the Holy Ghost upon others, *Act.* 8. 17. and 10. 44. and 19. 6. In matters of Faith, that concerned the Salvation of Sinners, and the Church's Edification, they were acted by a Spirit of infallibility, *Joh.* 16. 13. They could inflict corporal Punishments upon notorious Hypocrites and Blasphemers, *Act.* 5. 9, 10. and 13. 11. *2 Cor.* 10. 6. They were endued with a prophetic Spirit, whereby they could foretel things to come, *Rom.* 11. 25, 26. *2 Thess.* 2. 2. *1 Tim.* 4. 1. *2 Tim.* 3. 1. *Joh.* 16. 13. The whole Book of the Revelation is prophetic.

4. Consider the Church it self, and God's goodness was great to them in these respects. 1. Of Ordinances. 2. Order and Government. 3. Of the Purity and Simplicity of the Truth in those days. 4. Of their Gifts. 5. Their Graces. 6. Perseverance. 7. Sufferings. 1st. They had no Ordinances but what were of Divine Institution; these also were divinely Administred; and a glo-



rious Presence of God was that, that did highly beautifie all their Administrations. *Act. 4. 31. When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Rev. 1. 12, 14. In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks was one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a Garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, i. e. Jesus Christ who in respect of his Priestly Office had a tender Heart, and was both willing and ready to do them good. His head and his hair were white like wool; as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, i. e. In respect of his Prophetical Office, he did shew himself, in all their Church-Administrations, to be full of Wisdom, Gravity, Prudence, and Understanding; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice was as the voice of many waters, i. e. He did triumphantly conquer many stout-hearted and rebellious Sinners, by virtue of his Kingly Power and Regal Authority in his Ordinances, Ps. 110. 3, 4. and 45.*

2dly, God was good in respect of that good Order, Discipline and Government that was amongst them: Christ himself was their Sovereign and Supreme Law-giver in all Church-matters, according to what was Prophefied, *If. 9. 6, 7. The government shall be upon his shoulders: Zech. 6. 13. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory; and he shall sit and rule upon his throne. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were put in the hands of those that were faithful: Of Peter, Matth. 16. 19. Of all the Apostles, Joh. 20. Of the whole Church, Matth. 18. 17, 18. Here-*

in was their Order and Polity; that Church-Officers meddled only with what was proper for them, to wit, the Authoritative exercise of Church Power; and the Church meddled with nothing but what was proper for them. In the Primitive Church, during the first Century, nothing was done *sine consensu plebis*, without the consent of the People, as Mr. *Jacob* proves by an hundred Testimonies out of the purest Antiquity, they had the power of choosing their own Officers, *Act. 1. end*, and *6. begin*. Of admitting Members, as in the case of *Saul's* seeking to adjoin himself, who was hindred by the Brethren of the Church, till they received satisfaction from *Barnabas's Act*. Of casting out offending Members, *1 Cor. 5*. Of re-admitting Excommunicate Penitents, *2 Cor. 2*. Their order was, that no particular Church did arrogate Power or Jurisdiction over other particular Churches; the Church of *Antioch's* sending to *Jerusalem*, *Act. 15*. to consult with them concerning some Doctrinal Differences, does argue, That they had full power to determine the matter among themselves, without making any appeal: their order was, that they did not press things indifferent upon scrupling Consciences, as if they had been necessary, *Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8. and 9. Chapters*: They well knew that to have done otherwise, would have been Tyranny, and destructive to Christian Liberty; and so for many other things.

3. The Primitive Church, in respect of purity of Doctrine, was called, *Rev. 12. 1*. A Woman that had on her Head a Crown of twelve Stars; however they were branded by their Enemies as Heretical; yet the Doctrine they profess'd was purely Apostolical. It's true, false Teachers did

creep in now and then amongst them, and corrupted several Truths; but, through the vigilance and faithfulness of the Servants of God, they were quickly and convincingly confuted: They did teach that we must seek righteousness for Justification, partly by Christ, and partly by the Ceremonies of *Moses's Law*; but the Epistles to *Coloss.* *Galat.* and *Hebrews* were written against this Heresie. *Cerintus* denied the Divinity of Christ, for which the Gospel of *John* was written, 2 *Cor.* 11-2, 3. *I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ: for I fear lest as by any means the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

4. Herein was the Glory of the Primitive Church, That not only the Officers, but also many of their Members, were Men singularly qualified with gifts. 1 *Cor.* 1. 5, 7. *By him ye are enriched in every thing; in all utterance, and in all knowledge: So that ye come behind in no Gift. See 1 Cor. 14. Act. 8. Mark 16. 17. These signs shall follow them that believe, in my name shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.*

5. God was good to them in respect of Grace: *Rom.* 15. 14. *And I myself am perswaded of you brethren, that ye are full of goodness. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 3, 4, 5. Philip. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think*  
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this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel ye are all partakers of my grace: and this I pray, that your love may yet more and more abound in all knowledge, and in all judgment. Col. 1. 3, 4. We give thanks unto God—since we heard of your Faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the Saints. 1 Thes. 1. 3. Remembering without ceasing, your work of Faith, your labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and of our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. It was no small part of their Glory that they did so abound in Love, which did evidence it self in two notable Acts 1. They kept the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; though some were for Circumcision, others against it; some for observation of Days, Ceremonies, eating Meats, and others not, yet they did in a great measure live in Love and Unity, Acts 4. 32. The multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart, and of one Soul. 2. There was none of them wanted necessities so long as others had wherewithall to supply them, 2 Cor. 9. 12, 13, 14. The administration of this service, not only supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also, by many thanksgivings unto God; whilts by the experiment of this Ministration they glorifie God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all Men: And by their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you: Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Rom. 15. 25, 26, 27. I go to Jerusalem to minister to the Saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor Saints which are at Jerusalem, it hath pleased them verily and their debtors they are: For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to Minister unto them in carnal things.

Acts 2. 44, 45. All that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all Men, as every Man had need. And 4. 32. Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. 6. In all Changes and Conditions, they were constant, still one and the same, not fickle or variable, some times for one thing, sometimes for another, Acts 2. 42. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. 46. 47. And they continued daily in the Temple with one accord, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all people; and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. I Thes. 3. 12, 13. Rev. 3. 10. Thou hast kept the word of my patience. And 2. 13. I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satans seat is, and holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr—Lastly, The Lord was graciously pleased to confer the Honour of Martyrdom upon them: Stephen was the Proto-Martyr, Acts 7. They were



were scattered at *Jerusalem* by reason of Persecution. *Acts* 8. *Paul* and *Peter* suffered at *Rome* under *Nero*; the one Beheaded, the other Crucified: So also *James* surnamed *Justus*, Nay there was not one of the Apostles that escaped a violent Death, *John* only excepted. Let us make some use of all this in some Three or Four things. 1. Let us bless God for his goodness to them. O Blessed be the Lord that ever there was such a one as the Apostle *Paul*—O Blessed be the Lord for the Truths, Ordinances, Gifts and Graces that were communicated to them; we are in a sense sharers in the Mercies, What was then written or transacted, said or done, was all for our Instruction. 2. Did the Lord give forth such an abundant measure of the Spirit, at the first Plantation of the Gospel, according to what the Work of that Day did require, which was to bring the carnal *Jews* from off their Ceremonies, and the heathenish *Gentiles* from Satan to God, who must see Miracles, otherwise they will not believe? Let us believe and be confident that the same good God will not be wanting to proportion the Gifts and Graces of his Churches and Servants to the Work of this our Day, which is the reformation of Religion from Antichristianism. Blessed be the Lord for any small bedewings and besprinklings of the Spirit poured forth upon any in our times in order hereunto. 3. Let us from hence bemoan our selves, and others that go under the Name of Churches of Christ, who have degenerated so far from them in Doctrine, Discipline, Worship, Gifts, Graces, Holiness of Conversation, Perseverance

in Sufferings — *contraria mixta seposita clarius elucescunt*: In the primitive times Christ placed us in a kind of Paradise, but we have not kept our first Habitation. 4. Let's not only remember whence we are fallen, but also return to our first Estate, and when we set about a Reformation, whether Personal or Ecclesiastical: Let's be sure to set the primitive Pattern before us, as near as may be: Let's Love as they did, endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace as they did; continue steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of Bread and Prayers as they did — No sufferings frightened them from following the Lamb; be followers of them in all things, imitable so far as they were followers of Christ.

*Sixthly*, God was good to his Gospel-Israel, after the Death of the Apostles, till *Constantine's* time. And here before I come to particulars, it will be necessary to premise these few general considerations as introductory for the clearing of what is further intended. 1. Be it known to you, that immediately upon the Death of the Apostles the Church was in a persecuted state: It's true, it was so in their time, but not as afterwards, when there were publick Laws and Edicts made against the profession and professors of the Christian Religion, providence so ordering it, that they should have some respite till the Gospel and Churches had some Plantation. 2. The time of this persecuted Condition was Three Hundred Years or thereabouts. 3. The Instruments whom the Devil made use of for this diabolical Service, were the heathen Emperors of Rome, Rev. 12. 3.

The party there combating against *Michael* and his Angels, Christ and his People is thus described, *A great red Dragon, having seven Heads and ten Horns, and seven Crowns upon his Heads.* A Dragon because of his Power, red because of his Cruelty, having seven Heads *i.e.* seven several sorts of Governments in *Rome* heathenish, as also it was built upon seven Hills, having ten Heads with seven Crowns thereupon, to distinguish *Rome*-heathen from *Rome*-Antichristian, *Rev.* 13. 1. That has not only seven Heads and ten Horns, but also Crowns upon the Horns, to intimate that Antichrist made Kingdoms of those that were but Provinces, during the Dragon's Reign under the heathen Emperors. 4. Having perused several writers of great Note, both for Godliness and Learning, upon that transcendantly high mystical Scripture, of the Revelation: It's most probable as I humbly conceive, that they guess right who assert that the Seals Chap. 6. hold forth this State of the Church during the first three Centuries, of which Ch. 12. to verse 13. seems to be explicatory. 5. In treating of this Subject, I shall be necessitated to make use of History, to which I require no more of you but a Historical Faith: I account it a great Mercy that every Age has had some faithful Servants of God, whose care it has been to transmit to posterity the memorable acts of Divine Providence to his People, *Psal.* 145. 4. *One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts, I will speak of the glorious honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous works.*

1. God was good to them in giving forth this incomparable rich and rare Monument of the Revelation of *John* the Divine, the principal scope and intendment whereof was, 1. To forewarn them of the near approach of suffering times, that so they might not be surprized, but in a readiness to encounter therewith. 2. That they might know what their sufferings would be, by whom, and of what continuance. 3. That they should be comforted and encouraged under all, especially upon this two-fold consideration. 1. There's no sufferings shall befall you, but according to the predetermination and fore-appointment of a wise God, and loving Father. 2. Let the Churches troubles be what they will, they shall have a glorious and an assured issue; seeing this was the good end of God in transmitting this propheticall Piece of holy Writ to us, that it might be a Lanthorn to our Feet to direct our steps in a dark Place: Let's not slight this good providence, so as not at all to peruse it; only for the Lord's sake study Sobriety, Self-denial, Humility and Spirituality in your perusal, and then there will be no great danger, otherwise there may, and will *Rev. 3. 1, 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things.*

2. God's good Providence so ordered it, that their sufferings were for Righteousness sake, *Rev. 6. 9. They were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.* Their Testimony was this, The Devil is not to be Worshipped, nor any other Creature whatsoever. This enraged the Dragon who was then Worshipped,

shipped, to raise a persecution against them.  
 Rev. 12. 7. Their Testimony was that their  
 present way of Worship, though practised by  
 the Emperors, and established by the publick  
 Laws of the Empire, yet it was idolatrous,  
 sinful and detestable to God; this enraged the  
 Emperors against them; they testified that Je-  
 sus Christ was the only Son of God, and Sa-  
 viour of the World: The Senate of Rome re-  
 fused to acknowledge his Divinity, till first  
 by some Act or Law of theirs, it should be  
 so approved of and ratified, Rom. 1. 21, 22.  
 Herein the Romans *quand'became vain*  
*in their imaginations, and their foolish Heart*  
*was full of darkness, when they professed them-*  
*selves to be wise, they became fools.* From all  
 this it is evident that they suffered in a very  
 righteous Cause. 2. From this also that they  
 refused conformity to their way of Worship,  
 and would not do any the least thing that  
 might but seem to honour their Idols, tho'  
 much solicited thereunto, both by promises  
 of great rewards on the one hand, and threat-  
 nings of sore punishments on the other, *Eu-*  
*stachius* a Christian Souldier, with his whole  
 Family, was put to Death, though otherwise  
 he had done great service, meerly because he  
 would not on the day of Triumph, Sacrifice  
 with the Emperor. *Dioclesian's* own Wife be-  
 ing a Christian suffered on the same account.  
*Marcus Arethusius* not only refused to build  
 the Idols Temple, which himself had pulled  
 down, but also chused Death rather than to  
 contribute one Farthing towards it: They  
 would not deliver up their Bibles; they would  
 not give so much as a Clout or Rag, they  
 would



would not so much as throw a little incense on their Altars: A certain Christian Souldier would needs carry his Garland in his Hand, when his fellows did wear it on their Heads, in Testimony of Honour to their Idols. 3. They suffered because they would not persecute their fellow-Christians: A memorable instance is of that Christian Legion of Souldiers, who after an excellent Oration made by *Mauritius* their Commander to the Emperor *Maximinianus*, after they had been twice decimated, were afterwards all of them Slain, upon no other account, but because they would not fall upon their fellows. 4. That they suffered for Righteousness sake; may appear from the many false calumnies and accusations that were brought against them, *Rev. 12. 10.* When the Dragon in the persecuting Emperors had his deadly Wound, it's thus exprest, *The accuser of our brethren is cast down.* 1. They were accused for being Enemies to civil Government upon a two-fold account. 1. Because of their non-conformity to such edicts of the Empire, as were contrary to the Law of God. 2. Because they talked so much of the Kingdom of Christ, that in matters of Conference and Worship they acknowledged no Sovereignty nor Laws but his. *Trajan's* Persecution did arise upon *Euaristus's* exercising of Discipline in the Churches, without dependance upon the civil Power. The Emperor *Domitian* did diligently search for all that were any kin to Christ according to the Flesh, least happily some of them might lay claim to his Crown; that the primitive Christians were Enemies

to Magistrates and civil Government was a notorious falsehood both their Principles and Practices do abundantly testify, for sometimes when there were many hundreds of them Burnt in Churches, and thousands of them that were Soldiers in Arms, able enough to defend themselves, destroyed, they chused to suffer, rather than sinfully to make resistance.

2. They were most abominably slandered by Magicians, Idolatrous Priests, *Jews*, and other Apostate Christians, as guilty of the most horrid sins that could be named, at their Meetings; to wit, Incest, Adultrey, Drunkenness, Inhumanity——

3. Whatever Plagues were inflicted upon Persecutors, the blame of all was cast upon the Christians, as if they had been the only cause thereof; whereas indeed it was their own Sin of Persecuting God's People, and contempt of the Gospel, that occasioned all their judgments.

4. That they suffered for Righteousness, may appear from the Laws which were made against them; to wit these.

1. That all their Bibles should be delivered up and destroyed.

2. That they should not meet together for Religious exercises, unless it were Men apart, and Women apart, and so Women were to teach Women, contrary to Christs Law.

3. That no Ministers should meet together in any Synod, or otherwise; and that wherever they were apprehended they should be carried away to Prison. The Laws made by *Julian* for the extirpation of Christianity were these.

1. That no Children of Christians should be trained up in Schools, that so being ignorant, they might be incapacitated to plead for the Christian Religion

2. That

none should be benefited with any place, civil or military, but they that would Sacrifice to Idols. 3. That no Ministers should have any maintenance. 4. Meerly in spite to the Christians, he enacted a toleration to all sorts of Religion; whence the *Jews* were encouraged to lay the Foundation of the Temple, that abomination of desolation, against which God did so miraculously appear from Heaven above, and Earthquakes beneath, that there was not one Stone left upon another, according to what was prophesied by Christ, *Matth.* 24. 2.

3. God was good to them in this respect, That during their Persecuted Estate, he furnished them with Ministers, and others singularly qualified for the Service and Sufferings of that Day, as may appear, 1. By comparing *Rev.* 6. 1, 3, 5, 7. with 4. 7. By the Beasts which cried, Come and see, at the opening of the Seals, the Ministers of Christ are signified, the first was like a Lion, *i. e.* they did deliver their Masters Message, and do his Work, with an undaunted Lion-like Courage and Boldness. The second was like a Calf, *i. e.* they were fitted with a Spirit of Patience, and Meekness contentedly to undergo the Yoke of hard Labour and sore Pressures: The Third had the Face of a Man, *i. e.* they were furnished with a great measure of Heavenly Wisdom and Prudence in all their administrations. The fourth like a flying Eagle, *i. e.* some of them did soare aloft in searching into, and discovering of the great Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; they were very Heavenly-minded, and insisted much on such things as might make the Christians Dead to all things here below, such a one was *Poly-*  
*carpus*

*carpus*, who thus answered the Proconsul pressing him to deny Christ: These Eighty Six Years I have served a good Master, and why should I now deny him? At another time thus, I do even long for the Teeth of the devouring Beasts; they'll only grind us in a Mill, that we may be Wheat fit for our Masters Table. And *Ignatius* thus, I covet nothing that can be seen with Bodily Eyes, so that I may but enjoy Jesus Christ. Let the Fire, the Cross, the Beasts, the breaking of Bones, convulsion of Members, bruising of the whole Body, and the torments of the Devil seize upon me, provided I may be partaker of Christ. 2. The evidence of this may be evinced, if we consider, how that through their means the Gospel did so triumphantly conquer and captivate the Hearts and Affections of so many hundreds and thousands to the obedience of Christ, that of Rev. 6. 2. was applicable to their times. I saw, and behold a white Horse, and he that sat on him had a Bow, and a Crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer: The Gospel was then spread abroad into many several Nations: There was almost no place where the Christian Religion was not profest. *Plinius* reports, That the number of Christians did so encrease, notwithstanding of Persecution, that few or none did frequent the Idols Temples and Sacrifices. *Tertulian* said, all the other Monarchies have their Bounds and Limits, only Christ's Dominion was spread over all, and had no Bounds, whence he proved, That Christ could be no other but the Son of God: And as the same Author relates, If they had all forsaken the Towns of the Hea-

thens they had left them almost desolate. *Sanguine fundata est ecclesia, Sanguine crevit.* 3.

The greatness of the Mercy did appear in this, That the Lord did raise up some of very great eminency, to plead their Cause against Enemies of all sorts. 1. *Quadratus, Aristides, Apollonius, Melito, Asianus, Justin Martyr*

and *Tertullian*, did learnedly plead against Persecutors and Presented their Apologeticks to the Emperors. 2. *Origen* and *Celsus* did manage their cause against the Heathens. 3.

*Justin Martyr* against the *Jews*, in his Book called, *Dialogus cum Tryphone.* 4. *Tertullian*

both against *Jews* and *Gentiles.* 5. *Irenaeus* and *Tertullian* against Hereticks 4. As they

strenuously contended for the truth against all Enemies, so they laboured mightily to keep

the Churches at peace among themselves, especially *Irenaeus* and *Polycarpus*, who kept

the *Western* and *Eastern* Churches in concord, notwithstanding of their difference about keep-

ing of *Easter*; the one pleading it should be kept on the Sabbath, the other on the same Day

that the *Jews* of old did observe; let it fall to be the Sabbath, or any other Day of

the Week, in this Pacificatory Work they prevailed much, and were very successful, till

*Victor* Bishop of *Rome* took upon him to excommunicate them of the *East*, Anno 200

5. They were such as did with all seriousness call aloud upon the Churches to consider

the things that were of greatest concernment to them in that Estate. Rev. 6. At the opening

of every Seal, they called thus, Come and see. 1. That this was nothing but what was Pro-

phesied of before. 2. Come and see, i. e. consider-

sider-



sider that these things do not befall you by chance or Fortune, but take special notice of the Hand of God in all these providential Occurrences. 3. Come and see that Persecutors are limited, they cannot go beyond their Commission no further than Providence permits: A Horse and a Rider is the Type of every one of the four first Seals, to signifie that the reins of Persecutors are not upon their own Necks, but were wisely ordered and guided by the Hand of a skillful Rider. 4. Come and see your own sins as the procuring cause of all these Persecutions and Punishments, inflicted upon you. *Cyprian Lib. 4. Epist. 4. Quicquid patimur, peccata nostra meruere dum viam domini non tenemus, nec data nobis ad salutem celestia mandata servamus, fecit dominus noster voluntatem patris, at nos non facimus domini voluntatem patrimonio & lucro studentes, superbiam sectantes, emulationi ac dissentioni vacantes.* There were these particular sins which he acknowledged to be amongst them. 1. In general they did not walk so close with God as they should have done, nor did they study exactness in keeping the Commands of God, according to the pattern of Christ. 2. They did with too much eagerness pursue after the World. 3. They were Proud. 4. There were Emulations, Dissensions, Envyings and Divisions amongst them. 5. They were not so plain-hearted and faithfull in their dealings, as they should have been. *Simplicitatis & fidei negligentis.* 6. They denied themselves of the World in Words only, but not in Deeds; *saeculo verbis solis & non factis, renunciantes.* 7. Every one sought to please himself, displeasing

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sing others. *Unusquisque sibi placentes & aliis non placentes.*

5. Come and see the ends of God in all this  
 1. It is to declare his Holiness and Righteousness; he cannot away with Sin in any, how near or dear so ever to him. 2. To humble them for their Sins. 3. To exercise their Graces. 4. To discover Hypocrites. 5. That the Truths of the Gospel might be sufficiently confirmed and commended to after Ages, and succeeding Generations: After the Martyrdom of so many, there needs no new Miracles, to make us believe the Gospel. 6. That they might be Patterns to us in point of Suffering, demeaning our selves as they did.

6. Come and see the ends of God in delaying so long to give them deliverance. 1. Because Wicked Men had not yet filled up the measure of their Sins. 2. He had a mind to honour some more of his Servants with the Crown of Martyrdom. *Rev. 6. 10. And it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season until their fellow servants also and brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* When the scrawl of them that God had marked out for Sufferings, was made up, then they might expect Deliverance: Histories do relate, that in these purer primitive times, before the Apostacy of Rome, all their Ministers were Martyrs, till *Sylvester* the first, in *Constantine's* days.

4. God was very good to his People in those days, in giving them now and then some breathing time and respite from the heat of Persecution; as after *Domitian's* Death, they were not troubled for one whole year's time; under *Com-*  
*modus*

*modus* and *Heliogabalus*, they were free from Persecution; after *Decius* they had Peace for forty years together: It's very observable, That their Sufferings were little or nothing at all under some that were otherwise most notoriously Wicked; and they suffer'd greatly from some that were otherwise morally good Magistrates, to wit, *Hadrian*, that was called *Restaurator Orbis*, and *Trajan*, call'd *Princeps Optimus*; insomuch, that it afterwards became Proverbial, in Congratulating new Emperors with this Salutation, *Felicio Augusto, melior Trajano*; so also under *Antoninus Pius*, and *Severus*: Morality without Grace is sometimes a greater Enemy to the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ, than open Atheism and Profaneness. However, let the Persons and Instruments, under whom they had respite, be what they will, all was still to be attributed to the goodness of God, who did accomplish and bring it to pass, by such wonderful means; some whereof are these. 1. *Antoninus Pius* was taken off from Persecuting them by that extraordinary act of Providence, in hearing the Prayers of a Legion of Soldiers that were *Christians*, whereby his whole Army, in a great strait for Rain, were abundantly refreshed, and his Enemies miraculously defeated; God from Heaven fighting with Thunder and Lightning against them, for which that Legion was called, *Legio fulminatrix*, the Thundring Legion: This wrought so upon the Emperor, that presently he commanded the *Christians* should neither be sought for, nor punished if presented, but that their Accusers should be punished; For, saith he, *my own safety, and the safety of my Empire depends*

pendeth upon their Prayers. 2. *Aurelianus* having issued forth an Ediēt against the *Christians*, was so terrified with Thunder that he recalled it. 3. *Alexander Severus* was perswaded by his Mother *Mammea* to shew them favour; the hearing of the Learning of *Origin* sent for him, and was instructed by him. 4. *Hadrian's* Persecution was something mitigated by the Apologies which were presented to him by *Aristides* and *Quadratus*. 5. *Antoninus Pius* was made to relent by *Justin Martyr's* Apologetic. 6. Under *Trajan* the Persecution was staid by *Plinius Secundus*, who writ to the Emperor concerning their Innocence, That they were not Guilty of the Crimes charged upon them, in regard the Law of their God was very strict against such Sins; and that they used to meet before Day to Sing Psalms, and to Worship one call'd **J E S U S**.

5. God's goodness to them was in respect of the remarkable Judgments, which he brought upon most, if not all of their greatest Persecutors: I'll give you a Summary Survey of the Tragical ends of all of them throughout the Ten Persecutions. The First was under *Nero*, Anno 67. Who being hated of Men, and persued by the Senate of *Rome*, killed himself. Second under *Domitian*, Anno 90. His wife and Friends finding a Roll of the Names of *Christians*, which he had marked out for suffering, and their own amongst the rest, they killed him. Third under *Trajan*, Anno 100. who was all his Life time vexed with great troubles and commotions, and at last cut off by a strange Disease. Fourth under *Hadrian* and *Antoninus Pius*, Anno 126. *Hadrian* Died in  
great

great horreur of Conscience; it was he that cryed out, *O animula, vagula, blandula* — *Pius* Died of a Fever in three Days after he Sickned. Fifth under *Antoninus Philosophus* and *Verus*, I find nothing recorded of their Death, but *Antoninus* knew much trouble in his Lifetime, from the *Germans*, *Samaritans*, *Avidius*, *Cassius* and others. Sixth, under *Severus*, Anno 208. He was slain at *York*, by the *Northern Men* and *Scots*, and in his time a certain Judge, that pronounced Sentence against *Agapetus*, a holy Martyr, fell from the Bench, and Died suddenly. Seventh, under *Maximinus* Anno, 236. He was killed by his own Son, and Soldiers in his Tent at the Seige of *Aquileia*. Eighth under *Decius*, Anno 251. Being overcome by the *Scythians* or *Gothes*, he threw himself into a Pit, where he ended his Life, and his Body could never be found. Ninth, under *Gallus* and *Volusianus*, Anno 258. A sad Pestilence in his time; was slain by *Æmilianus*, one of his own Captains, together with his Son. *Valerianus* being overcome by the *Persians*, *Sopor* trod upon him while he took Horse. The last was under *Dioclesian* and *Maximinian*, Anno 300. Both of them in one Day divested themselves of the imperial dignity, and chused to live in Dens and Caves: *Dioclesian* afterwards Poisoned himself, rather than he would see *Constantine*; and *Maximinianus* hanged himself.

6. God was good in giving them a glorious deliverance from this their persecuted State, and that by the Hands of *Constantine*, where these passages of Providence are remarkable.

1. He had a kind of immediate Call from Hea-



ven, both to embrace the Christian Religion, as also to go against that Persecuting Tyrant *Maxentius*; witness the voice which he heard, *ἐν τῷ πνεύματι*, in Christ thou shalt overcome: *Eusebius* that lived in his time, tells us, That he heard himself relate this, confirming it with an Oath. 2. God preserved him for this Service from the treacherous Design of his Father in Law *Maximinianus*, his Wife having discovered it to him. 3. *Maxentius* had made a device to drown him and his Men, when he passed over a Bridge, by which *Maxentius* himself was afterward drowned, and he escaped, for which the Christians sung, *Psal.* 9. 16. And 7. 15. 4. Having giving himself to Fasting and Prayer, he obtained Victory over *Maximinus* and *Licinius*; and though *Licinius* had once greatly reproached Christ and Christianity yet being brought to condign Punishment, he was made to confess that great was the Christians God, and great was *Constantine's* God.

Let's make some Application of the Promises in these few Particulars.

1. This calls upon us highly to esteem of the glorious Truths of Christ, in regard they have been Sealed and Witnessed to with the Blood of so many Millions of Martyrs. O how wonderful are the Ways of God that would take such a Course to commend the Gospel of the Son of God to us, who knows, but they of that Age suffered, that we and others might at least in a great measure be excused.

2. Though they excused us so far that the Church is never like to be in a Persecuted State for Three hundred Years together, yet there is

is no Age in which this, or t<sup>o</sup>ther particular Person can promise an exemption from Persecution to himself; and therefore it sounds an Alarm to us in the times of our greatest Peace and Prosperity, to prepare for Persecution: Lay in a stock of Suffering Graces before, that so it may never surprize you unawares, but, come when it will, you may be ready for it. Take special notice of these three things. 1. Persecution has been in all Ages, an inseparable Concomitant of the plain and faithful Preaching of the Gospel, *Matth.* 10. 34, 35. 2. It was never better with the Church and People of God than in times of Persecution; there was never a more glorious Lustre and Beauty upon Ordinances; Ministers never more Lively and Spiritual; the Conversation of Christians never more in Heaven; and the number of Converts never more encreased. 3. Be confirmed in this, That the speciality of God's Love in Christ to his People, may very well stand with their being in a Persecuted Condition; so that it may be always said, *Truly God is good to Israel.*

3. In all your Sufferings let the Martyrs of those times before you as Patterns for imitation. 1. As I would not have you decline Sufferings for the Gospel and Righteousness sake, when indeed called of God thereunto, so be careful not to suffer as Bovie-bodies, or Evil-doers: Martyrdom for Christ was accounted so honourable amongst them, that the Names of all that were Martyrs indeed, were register'd, and kept upon Record; and such as did Suffer, either not for Truth, or without a Call, out of an itching appetite for Honour, were not Enroll'd. 2. In all your Sufferings own Magistracy, and honour  
the

the Authority of Magistrates; I am sure this was the Doctrine and Practice of Christ, the Apostles and the purer primitive Churches. 3. Shew all Meekness towards your Persecutors, that they may be convinced, it is not through a peevish humoursomness or Pride, but really for Conscience sake, because you dare not sin against God, that you do and suffer what you do; condescend to them in all things civil, unless they impose upon your Consciences, something contrary to God's Word. 4. Shew Love to the Souls of those that hate you with a most cruel hatred, in praying sincerely, heartily, and constantly for them, *Matth. 5. end.* 5. Do not use any sinful or unlawful means to deliver your self from sufferings, *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* 6. As I would have none to venture upon sufferings in their own Strength a Fleishly confidence will fail you in an Hour of Temptation, so let not the sense of thy own weakness cause discouragement and a despondence of Spirit, but rather act dependence upon this good God, that when ever he gives the Call, he will proportion thy Strength in some measure to thy Sufferings, *1 Cor. 10. 13. 7.* These primitive Martyrs were not only patient, but of a chearful Spirit in all their Sufferings, they Sung Psalms to one Jesus. Let this be the Gospel-Frame of Spirit you are of, *in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God your Heavenly Father, 1 Theff. 5. 18.* 8. Be much in Prayer, in the exercise of Repentance, and of Faith, in applying particular Promises to your own Souls, and in realizing the Glorious things of Eternity. 9. In all your Sufferings be publick Spirited. *i. e.* Let Gods Glory.

Glory, the honour of the Gospel, the Edification of Churches and Christians, and thy own Souls Advantage be aimed at: Do not think how thou mayest get Honour and a Name to thy self, but rather (1 Cor. 10. 31. whatsoever thou dost do or suffer, let all be for the Glory of God. 10. Think it not enough to begin well, but resolve in the Lord's Strength to continue faithful to the Death, and thou shalt be sure of the Crown of Life.

7. God was good to his People from *Constantine's* time, and the first beginning of Antichrists Rise, to his full height, and to put the two last in one, he has been good to them ever since he began to decay, and will continue his Goodness to them more and more, to the end of the World: And here it will be necessary for your better understanding of this Subject, to premise a few things. 1. No sooner was the Church delivered from a Persecuted State, but immediately upon the back of that, a new Storm did arise. 2. The Churches Tryals now, are of a different Nature from what they were formerly, as then they Suffered from professed Pagans, so now they are exercised with Spiritual Judgments, they were pestered with Heresies and Errors from within, and such as by Profession were Christians. 3. This is not so to be understood, as if they shall not now suffer Persecution, but the Denomination of the Churches State, is from that which is Chief and Principal of the two Evils, Heresies were the greatest. 4. The Instruments by whom they suffered, were Antichrist and his Adherents. 5. In treating of these things, I shall take it for granted, that the Churches suffer-

ings

ings in this Age, is contained under the Trumpets, 8. and 9. Chap. of the *Revel.* 6. I understand the 7th Chap. of the *Revel.* to be only a preparative to the sounding of the Trumpets, and intervenes between the opening of the 6th and 7th Seals, as also that the 10th Chap. and beginning of the 11th is no new Prophecy distinct from the Prophecy of the Trumpets, but only intervenes between the 6th and 7th. 7. I must speak particularly and more largely than I intended of the evils of this Age, that so the Goodness of God in preserving them from the same, may appear to be the greater, and so for methods sake, I shall summarily give you the substance of the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, Chap. of the *Revel.* as they lie in order.

*Revelations* Chap. Seven.

1. Take notice, that the Nature of the Evil to ensue is hinted at v. 1, 2. There were *Four Angels standing on the four Corners of the Earth, holding the four Winds, that they should not blow upon the Earth, nor on the Sea, nor on the Trees.* This was the Judgment that was to come upon earthy, unstable and self-conceited Professors of the visible Church, ever a suspension of the influences of the North and South-Wind of the Spirit, throughout all the Corners of the Earth. 2. It is observable that this, nor any other kind of evil can befall Creatures by chance, but by the Hand of an over-Ruling Divine providence. Four Angels are Empowered and Commissioned from above, before the thing be put in Execution. 3. From verse 2. 3. Observe, Such is God's Goodness, and



and Christ's tender Care towards his poor People, that he suffers not these Commissioned Executioners of Divine Justice, to go on hastily with their Work, till they were sufficiently prepared and guarded against it. 4. The Great Lord Chancellor, the Keeper of the Great Seal of Heaven, is pleased to set his own Mark upon his chosen Ones, whereby they may be ensafed, and secured against this ensuing Evil: Hurt not — till we have Sealed the Servants of our God in their Foreheads. He gives them that excellent Unction 1 *John* 2. and anointing of the Spirit, that though Antichristian Calamities may reach their Bodies, yet they shall never be able to do their Souls any considerable hurt. 5. herein is the Goodness of God yet further, that during Antichrists Rage, the Sealed Ones are exactly Numbred to a Man, in the Court-Rolls of Heaven One Hundred Forty Four Thousand out of all the Tribes of *Israel*, i. e. as the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* were but few in respect of other Nations, and the Elect of God among themselves, were but few in respect of those that were called *Israelites*; so the Number of those that are preserved from Antichristian Pollutiones shall be few in respect of a world of carnal Professors, that shall wonder after the Beast. 6. From verse 9. to the end, you have an excellent propheticall hint of their deliverance from Antichristianism, and then their Condition shall be glorious comparatively, i. e. in respect of her Wilderness condition, and prophesying in Sackcloth; then shall there be a multitude which no Man can Number, of all Nations; and they shall stand before

fore the Throne, and before the Lamb. Tho' it was hardly visible, whether there was a Church or no formerly, yet now they shall openly shew themselves, Cloathed with white Robes, to shew that they have shaken off Popery, with its Doctrine of Merits, Indulgences, Penances and Satisfactions, and seek Justification only by Faith in Christ, and his Righteousness; having Palms in their Hands, as a sign of Victory over the Beast, over his Mark, his Image, and the Number of his Name; and they cried with a loud Voice, Salvation of our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, and the Angels also fell on their Faces before the Throne, and Worshipped God, saying, Amen. Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen. The State of the Church, shall now be a kind of Heaven upon Earth, in comparison of what it was during Antichrists Reign, and her Glory shall still encrease from one Degree to another, till she be fully possessed of Heaven it self, where their shall be a total exemption from all Evil, and an abundant affluence of all good, truly God is good to *Israel*

*Chapter Eighth.*

This Eighth Chapter does under the First four Trumpets, contain as I humbly conceive the Churches Sufferings for the next Three Hundred Years after *Constantine*; where observe. 1. Upon opening the Seventh Seal, there was silence in Heaven for half an hour, i. e. for

for some short time the Church had some respite from outward Commotions and Troubles; and this is to be reckon'd among the Demonstrations of God's goodness to them; or it signifies a holy attention in Heaven's Inhabitants, the Christians, to what God shall be pleas'd to speak to them by this Seal, that brings forth Seven several Trumps, and each of them a several Judgment; it put them in a kind of amaze to consider, That no sooner they were deliver'd from *Paganish* Persecutions, which lasted for Three hundred Years, but immediately there's a new Cloud a gathering.

2. To the Seven Angels, which stood before God, were given Seven Trumpets, v. 2. to intimate God's goodness in this, That he did solemnly denounce Wrath and Judgment against Carnal Christians, that began to corrupt their Ways, and thereby did call aloud upon them to Repent; Trumpets are for an Alarm to War, and they give a distinct sound, that every one may know their Duty: So good is God, that he is not willing that any should Perish, but all should come to the knowledge of the Truth, Repent and be Saved.

3. Even in those Days God had a Praying People, whose Persons and Prayers found acceptance, through the Intercession of Jesus Christ. Verse 3, 4. *Another Angel came, and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the Saints, upon the golden Altar which was before the throne; and the smoak of the incense, which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand.*

4. The very same Angel of the Covenant, Christ himself, takes some Fire from off the Altar, and casts it into the Earth: *And then there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, v. 5.* It's he that perfumes the Saints Prayers, that plagues and punishes the world of Apostate Professors with spiritual Judgments; All Judgment is committed of the Father to the Son, and therefore the Sealed ones may be secure; they need not be afraid of what shall fall out. O the goodness of God in this thing: And now I come to the Trumpets themselves.

*When the first Angel sounded, there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of the trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up, vers. 7.* This may be fully applied to Arrianism, the first spiritual Plague wherewith the Church was pestered even in *Constantine's* time; It brought Hail with it, which is a cold and nipping thing, destructive, especially to Trees and Grass. Many Trees, *i. e.* Eminent Ones, became cold in matters of Worship, and in their Love one to another: And all Grass was burnt up, *i. e.* The generality of common Professors throughout the World were much Baptized into Arrianism: There was Fire mingled with Blood, *i. e.* It produced a most bloody Persecution of all that were Asserters of the Divinity of Christ, and his being Co-equal, Co-essential and Co-eternal with the Father.

God's goodness under this Trumpet was in these two, 1. There was but a third part of the Trees burnt up, *i. e.* There were several Persons of great Note, both Magistrates and Ministers, who did, even in those days, faithfully witness to

to the Truth; of Emperors, *Constantine, Valentinian, Gratian, Theodosius*; of Ministers, *Alexander, Hosius, Felix Secundus, &c.* 2. Tho' Fundamental Truths were much struck at, yet the Lord caused the Earth to help the Woman, *Rev. 12. 16. i. e.* Tho' their Synods and Councils did begin to grow very earthly, carnal, and corrupt, yet God made use of them for the preservation of Fundamental Controverted Truths, in there Purity and Incorruption. In the Council of *Nice*, call'd by *Constantine, Anno 330.* *Arrianism* was abundantly confuted; in that of *Constantinople, Anno 380.* under *Gratian* and *Theodosius. Macedonius*, and his Followers, called *μετάνοιοι*, because they denied the Personality of the Holy Ghost, were confuted: The Third great Council at *Ephesus*, under *Theodosius II. Anno 431.* did condemn *Nestorius's* holding that Christ had two Persons: The Fourth at *Chalcedon*, under *Martianus, An. 451.* condemned the *Eutychians* confounding the Natures of Christ.

Upon the sounding of the Second Trumpet There was as it were, a mountain burning with fire cast into the Sea; and the third part of the Sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures, which were in the Sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the Ships were destroyed, i.e. Now began hot contests between Church-men for Precedency; and this did quickly corrupt the Ordinances themselves, the Seas and Ships, by which, Christians, as such, do maintain a Spiritual Trade and Commerce with God and one with another: Contentions among Church-men were a fair Foundation, laid by the Dragon, for the intended and designed Superstructure of Antichristianism; and they were kindled, 1. By  
G 2 their



their own Pride and Ambition. 2. By reason of the great Benefices bestowed upon them by *Constantine*; witness that Voice then heard, *Hodie venenum effusum est in ecclesiam*, this day Poison is poured out on the Church: It might then be said, *Religio peperit divitias, & filia devoravit matrem*. 3. They had the favour of the Emperors, and great Men. 4. Because their Ministry was in the Imperial Seat, they claim'd more than ordinary Privileges. 5. Some good Men, being much wrong'd and injur'd, by the unjust Sentences and Church-Censures, issued forth against them in the Eastern Councils, did address themselves to the Church of *Rome*, as being then most pure, that they would interpose for some Remedy and Redress, which was afterwards so much abused, That the See of *Rome* claim'd it as a privilege, That all Appeals should be made to them; as may appear in the case of *Appiarius*, at a Council of *Constantinople*: This being withstood by the Eastern Churches, occasioned many hot Debates; and now it was that they had Wooden Bishops, and Golden Chalices; whereas, in the days of Persecution, they had Golden Bishops, but Wooden Chalices.

The goodness of God, under this Trumpet, was, in suffering only a third part of the Waters to be corrupted; he preserves still some, both Professors and Ordinances, from Antichristian Pollutions.

Upon the sounding of the Third Angel, *There fell a great Star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the Rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the Star is called Wormwood; and the*

*the third part of the waters became Wormwood, and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter, i. e.* Now the Apostacy grows higher, whereas before Trees, and Grass, and Seas, now Rivers and Fountains are Corrupted, *i. e.* The very Scriptures, and some of the choicest Streams thereof, which convey spiritual Light and Life to Souls, were much perverted, the preceding Trumpets did strike at Christ in his Person and Natures, this at his Offices; now comes in the Doctrine of Merit, Popish Pennances, Indulgences, Mediators, Invocation of Saints. This is fitly applicable to *Pelagius*, who lived in the days of *Honorius* and *Aradius*, An. 405, or 415, He corrupted the Covenant of Grace it self; that River, the Streams whereof make glad the People of God: He was a great Star, that did burn as it were a Lamp; he was a Man of great Parts and seemingly Godly; but it was only the flourishes of natural and acquired Accomplishments, not saving Grace wherewith he did shine.

God's goodness here was in this, that he suffer'd only a third part of the Waters to be im-bitter'd, tho' *Pelagianism* did exceedingly spread through *Italy*, *France*, and *Britain*, yet the Lord had still some eminent Lights in the Church, that set themselves against it; to wit, *Augustine*, *Ferome*, *Prosper*, *Optatus*, &c.

Upon the sounding of the Fourth Angel, *The third part of the Sun was darkned, and the third part of the Moon, and the third part of the Stars, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise, i. e.* This degree of Apostacy is so much higher than the former, as the Sun, Moon, and Stars, are higher than the Earth,

Seas, Fountains, and Rivers; Now Darknes does in a great measure overspread the whole Face of the visible Church; former Evils did arise from Pride and Ambition, more than Ignorance; but now both go together: This is applicable to the Sixth Century, wherein lights of all sorts came to be Darkned and Obscured, there was a general decay of Simplicity and Purity in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government; a thick Veil upon Scriptures, Officers, Ordinances, People, and All; now the Gospel was much eclipsed with Humane Traditions, Ceremonies, and Superstitions; now we read of building of Abbies and Monastries, of Kings and Queens deserting a Married state to go a Pilgrimage, meerly out of a blind Devotion, multiplying of holy Days; and many other Superstitious Fopperies. God's goodness also here is obvious from the Text; a third part of the Sun only was darkned, &c. as also from the last verse, which is only a Transition to what follows, intimating, that tho' these four Woes that are past be great, yet there are three greater to come, tho' the Churches afflictions, during this Century, were very sad, yet not comparable to what others, especially those of the succeeding Age, encountred with.

A few words of Application. 1. From all this we may learn, That one of the greatest designs that ever the Devil had against the Church was to corrupt Truths, Ordinances, and Worship. Let us therefore Counter-work him in studying and endeavouring nothing more, than the preservation of the Purity of the Gospel both in Doctrine and Worship. 2. So hard a matter it is for Professors and Preachers to have their Garments kept

kept clean from such pollution, that the Sealings of God by Jesus Christ are the only preservative against the same: It is not Morality, Learning, Policy, or great Parts, without saving Grace, that will do. All you that are in any measure chaste Virgins, acknowledge the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of Heaven for this rich Mercy. 3. As I observed before, that the Church never knew a more thriving time than under Persecution; so it never fared worse with them, than in a time of temporal and secular Prosperity: Let us therefore, when God calls to it, be content with Persecution, as well as Prosperity. 4. From what has been said, it's clear as the Sun, That the great Antichrist had his first Rise and Origination out of the Ashes of the Pride and Covetousness of the carnal Clergy; and where-ever these are found in this Day, I dare be bold to say, It is a piece of Antichristianism, mark'd out for Destruction, by the Righteous Judge of all the World. 5. Much of God's goodness is in this, That all these Trumpets are not sounded together, but one after another, and he begins to punish with lesser, before he proceed to greater Judgments. O stand in awe and sin not; take warning by one Rod, otherwise thou shalt know that he has more Rods than one. 6. We see Antichrist's Promotion and Advancement was by degrees, and so shall also his Ruine, therefore we had need of Patience.

*Chap. Ninth.*

This Chapter contains two Trumpets more; the 5th from the beginning to *vers.* 13. and 6th to the end. The 5th holds forth the Mystery

of Iniquity as higher than ever, so that things cannot be in a more Corrupted State than now, the method I shall observe shall be as briefly as may be to open the Words as they lie in order.

Upon the sounding of the first Angel. 1. You have the fall of a Star from Heaven to Earth; this is *Boniface* the Third Bishop of *Rome*, who *Anno* 606 got himself to be stiled universal Bishop, by the means of *Phocas*, after he had killed his Master *Mauritius* the Emperor. 2. His Commission shewed him to be the Dragons Lord Lieutenant. Whereas Originally Ministers did receive the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, from Christ, Antichrist receives the Keys of the bottomless Pit, and derives his Authority from the Devil. v. 1.

3. You have the Execution of his Commission, no sooner is he invested with this Power, but he improves it; he opened the bottomless Pit, now Hell it self is set loose, to do what mischief it can. Verse 2. 4. The effects that followed upon this opening, are these Two, 1. There arose a Smoak like the Smoak of a great Furnace, whereby the Sun and Air were Darkened, *i. e.* whereas under the fourth Trumpet only a Third part of the Sun was Darkened; Now there is a total Eclipse, and a thick Mist upon the Face of the whole Earth; the petty Antichrists that preceded, did only Corrupt and Adulterate some Truths and Ordinances: Thus all His Smoak is as the Smoak of a great Furnace, a complex Body, a Flood and Inundation of all manner of Errors and Heresies: He calls all that endeavour a Reformation in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, Hereticks and Schismatics, but indeed, he is the great Heretick.

2. Out



2. Out of this Smoak came out Locusts. Verse 3. *i. e.* the Romish and Antichristian Clergy, called Locusts. 1. Because there are such numerous swarms of them, that were never of Divine Institution. Popes, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Arch-Bishops, Lord-Prelates, &c. some do reckon 35 orders of that Hierarchy, to which *Aisted* says do belong 225044 Monasteries. 2. Because of their hurtfulness to Souls, as Locusts to Trees and Grass. They are further described from verse 4. to the end of this Trumpet, the Spirit of God hereby pointing to us, That this Romish Hierarchy is one of the greatest Pillars of Antichrists Kingdom; where you may mark these properties in them. 1. They have power to Sting, *i. e.* to torment the Souls and Consciences of Men and Women. Verse 3, 5, 6. They shall so put them on the Rack, *That in those days Men shall seek Death, and shall not find it, they shall desire Death, and it shall flee away.* They Preach that they must believe as the Church believeth, that they must perfectly keep the Law of God, otherwise they are Damned — and having thus wounded, the Remedy is worse than the Disease; they put Men upon satisfying God's Justice at least for some sins, and procuring Peace of Conscience by their own good Works and Merits, that no Man can be assured of his Salvation in this Life, that after Death their Souls go into Purgatory, out of which they are to be redeemed by saying so many Soul-Masses for them, for which they must endow the Church with a good part of their Estates: This their Stinging was like unto a Scorpion a dangerous kind of Serpent, that goes wayward-ly

ly, and Stings when it seems not to do so: Their Power thus to torment, was but for five Months, this is in allusion to the Locusts who continue from *April to September*, to destroy Trees and Grass. Verse 5. 2. As to their shape, they were like unto Horses prepared unto Battle, *i. e.* they are swift, nimble and active, strong and well fed, meer belly-Gods. 3. On their Heads they have Crowns, as it were like unto Gold, *i. e.* they live in such State, Pomp and Grandure, that they are more like Monarchs than Gospel-Ministers, though indeed they are neither, for their Crowns are not Gold, but like unto it; they plead that their Church Government is of Divine Right, their Authority is from Jesus Christ, but all is not Gold that glisters, pretend what they will, they came out of the bottomless Pit. 4. *Their faces were as the faces of Men.* Verse 7. *i. e.* They shew themselves very sociable and affable, meerly to insinuate into the Affections of others, or, they plead, its reason by which they are regulated in all their Administrations, is it not reason that all things should be done decently and in order, that the Church should have a Power in Ceremonies and Matters indifferent to determine the Practices of People, how can their be any peace without Uniformity? Non conformists can be no other but a company of proud Persons that affect Novelty and Singularity. 5. *Their hair is like the hair of Women.* Verse 8. *i. e.* They are Spiritually Effeminate, and with their whorish Deckings and Attire, they allure others to commit Spiritual Fornication. 6. *Their teeth are as the teeth of Lions.* Verse 8. *i. e.* They are very, cruel but cunning, the teeth

lie hid; in this they are distinguished from the *Turks* in the following Trumpet, *Whose heads are as lions*, i. e. They openly profess their Cruelty. 7. *They had breast-plates as it were of iron*, i. e. They arm themselves so, that none can do them hurt, either they get Magistrates to be on their side, or to be privileged with immunities from the jurisdiction of Magistrates. 8. *The sound of their wings is as the sound of Chariots of many horses, running to battle*, i. e. Their Church-Censures, Bulls and Excommunications is with great noise, horror, and dread, by which Emperors and Kings themselves have been greatly awed. 9. *They have stings in their tails*. Verse 10. i. e. With their flattering Speeches, and plausible Pretences they captivate poor simple ones. Lastly, *They have a King over them, which is the Angel of the bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, destroyer*. i. e. Though they have many several orders and degrees amongst themselves, yet they are all of them subordinate to one supream Head the Pope; though some may pretend very fair, yet their Offices, Orders and Degrees, came Originally from him that is the Angel of the bottomless Pit.

The goodness of God under this trumpet is in the 9th, Verse. Though their Commission was very extensive in having power to hurt all, yet it did not reach the Sealed Ones, and to say no more but this, the greater the judgment was, the more did the goodness of God appear in securing his hidden Ones from it. And thus of the 5th Trumpet.

The Scope of the sixth Trumpet, is to show that Idolatry and Superstition being now so  
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rise amongst those that were called Christians; the Righteous God was resolved to raise up the *Sarazens* and *Turks* as a scourge for the same, the judgment of this Trumpet not being a Spiritual, but a Temporal one. Most Expressions may be understood literally; I will cursorily run over the whole.

Upon the sounding of the sixth Angel, a voice was heard from the 4 Horns of the Golden Altar which is before God, saying, *Loose the four Angels which are bound in the great River Euphrates*, which was accordingly done Verse 14. 15. i. e. Whereas the forementioned barbarous People were hereto by God's Providence restrained from breaking in upon the Western part of the World, and kept on the other side of *Euphrates*, now they are commissioned from Jesus Christ to come against the Christians for their Idolatry. *The number of the army of the horsemen, were two hundred thousand thousand*, i. e. Of all People in the World none comparable to the *Turks* for Horses; they are infinitely numerous, v. 16. *And the riders that sat on them have breast-plates of fire, of jacinth, and of brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions*, i. e. they are terrible and cruel, and profess themselves to be so; *and out of their mouths issued fire and smoak, and brimstone*: Some understand hereby their great Guns and Cannons, which Instruments of War were first invented by them, v. 17. *And by the fire, smoak, and brimstone, which issued out of their mouths, the third part of men were killed*, ver. 18. The Locusts work was but to torment and hurt, but these do make havoc, kill and destroy; *Their power also is in their mouth and in their tails, for their tails were*

were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt, ver. 19. *i. e.* As they exercise horrid cruelty in killing the Bodies of Men and Women, so also they vent pestiferous Doctrine in their Alcoran and Mahometan Religion; the Locusts had the stings of Scorpions in their tails, but *Mahomet* has not only the sting of a Serpent, but also the head of a Serpent; does openly appear upon his tail, *i. e.* Popery is a mystery of Iniquity, but any may easily discover the *Turks* Alcoran to be nothing else but a compound of *Judaism*, *Paganism*, and *Christianism*: This to me is a strong Argument, why the *Pope*, not the *Turk*, must be the Great Antichrist. And the rest of the Men which were not killed by these Plagues yet repented not of the Works of their hands that they should not Worship Devils and Idols of Gold and Silver and Brass, Stone and Wood, neither can See, and Hear nor Walk. Verse 20. *i. e.* Notwithstanding all the judgments wherewith God punished the Papists for their Idolatry, yet they repented not, but remained Idolatrous still, neither repented they of their Murthers; they killed the Souls and Bodies of Men as fast as ever, nor of their Sorceries, they did bewitch and allure People to their Whorish Worshipps still, nor of their Fornications, Spiritual or Bodily, the *Pope* is said to have Forty Thousand Crowns a Year by Stews and Bawdy Houses, nor of their thefts. Verse 21. Though most of their Church-Lands and Revenues were Originally got by indirect courses cozening many poor Creatures, in making them give away their Estates, for saying some Soul-Masses, to redeem them out of Purgatory, yet they will not make restitution, they accuse o-  
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thers of Sacrilege, that would but resume and take back their own, while they themselves are most impiously Sacrilegious.

God's Goodness in reference to this Trumpet, is, 1. That in the management of this great Affair, of Commissioning the *Turk* against the *Papists*, lies upon Jesus Christ. O blessed be our God that takes so great care of Christians. 2. The *Turks* Commission is principally against the Western Idolaters on this side *Euphrates*, he that set bounds to the raging of the Waves of the Sea, has limited him that he can go so far and no farther: And hence it is that we in this part of the World have never received any considerable hurt by him, nor are ever like to receive hurt hereafter, unless we shall Apostatize to open Idolatry. 3. As his Commission is limited both as to Persons and Places, so also as to Times; the time of his Rage and Reign shall be *for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.* ver. 15. *i. e.* It is exactly reckoned and calculated with God to an hour. 4. Tho' God destroys and makes havock of a third part of the *Pope's* Dominions by the *Turks*, yet the mystery of Iniquity is not so much as once touched by them; the Discovery and Destruction thereof he reserves for some others of his dear Servants, which shall be done under the next Trumpet. 5. O how good is this God, and what a miracle of Mercy is it, that he will grant some time for Repentance, even to Antichristian Sinners, that he will send Judgments on purpose to bring them to Repentance; extraordinary means, answerable to the greatness of their Diseases! O the Long-suffering and Patience of God, that notwithstanding of their Impenitency, and mis-

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improving of Providences, he does not utterly, in an instant, destroy them, but delays the execution of his Justice and Wrath, as at this day, and if his Long-suffering and Patience be so great to his Enemies, what will his goodness be to his Friends? Blessed be our God that has begun to give Antichrist such a blow by the *Barbarians*; it is to me an infallible assuring Evidence, that the Work shall go on and prosper till it come to its full period.

### Chapter Tenth.

This whole Chapter and the beginning of the Eleventh to the 15th *verse*, I understand to be a preparation to the sounding of the 7th Trumpet, and that for the comfort of God's People, who might be apt to droop and despond concerning the event of all those sad dispensations, Antichrist being brought to a great height under the foregoing Trumpets, and they not knowing what way God would take to turn the Scales.

1. It's here in a Vision shewed to *John*, that Antichrist persisting impenitent for all that the *Turks* had done, *Chap. 9. 21.* Christ himself would now take some course with him: He is described as a mighty Angel coming down from Heaven, *Clothed with a cloud*, as a sign of divine Glory and Majesty, *having a Rainbow on his head*, by this representation to assure them that he would prove a Covenant-keeping God, that Antichrist shall not Lord it over them at the old rate, *his face was as the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire*, ver. 1. i. e. In his bringing Ruine on Antichrist he shall be very Glorious, it shall be with such clearness and perspicuity

cuity of Light, as shall be sufficient to dispel all the Smoak that arose out of the Bottomless Pit; and it shall be with a Power and Efficacy irresistible. 2. We have some intimation of the way Christ will take for the accomplishment of this; *He had an open book in his hand, and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cryed with a loud voice, as when a lyon cryeth, and when he cryed seven thunders uttered their voices,* ver. 2, 3, 4. i. e. He will make the plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel, to have a more free passage throughout the World than formerly: The Command *John* had to Seal up these things, may signifie that what is here hinted belongs to some other Prophecy in this Book, the clear and full Revelation whereof is to be reserved till the time of its fulfilling. 3. Because the Destruction of Antichrist, after he had domineered for so many hundred Years, seems almost impossible and incredible; therefore Christ does, for the confirmation of the Faith of his poor weak Ones, enter into a solemn Oath, *By him that liveth for ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein — that time shall be no longer, and that the seventh trumpet should finish the mystery of God,* ver. 5, 6, 7. His time of Reigning shall be no longer, his Ruine shall now certainly begin, and be carryed on till time be no more. 4. The Book in the Angel's hand is given to *John*, who, Eating it, finds it sweet in his Mouth as honey, but bitter in the Belly, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. Christ has not only perfect knowledge of these Mysteries himself, the Book is open in his hand, but also he qualifies some of his faithful Gospel-ministers, not only to

preach

preach the Everlasting Gospel, but more particularly to prophesie *Babylon's* Downfall, which tho' it be a very delightful and pleasing piece of service in the doing of it, yet afterwards it exposes them to fore Persecutions that prove bitter.

### Chap. Eleven.

The former Chapter having Prophesied of *Rome's* ruine, of the Discovery and Destruction of the Mystery of Iniquity and Son of Perdition, and that by the preaching of the Everlasting Gospel, a doubt now arises concerning the fulfilling of this, how can there be any Prophesying or Preaching where there is no Church, and if there be no Church, there can be no Prophets? Antichrist has now possessed himself of the Temple of God, and so Corrupted all under the foregoing Trumpets, as has been already cleared, that it's hardly visible whether Christ have any Church or Kingdom in the World. This Chap. solves this Scruple, and affords some grounds of sweet comfort against this Discouragement. The substance of the Chap. so much as concerns the Slaying and Resurrection of the witnesses take in some few Doctrinal Propositions.

I. When Antichrist is at his height, then does the Work of Reformation begin. There was given me a Reed like unto a Rod, commanding me to measure the Temple, the Altar, and them that Worship therein. Verse 1. A Metaphor taken from *Masons* or such Artificers, who in building a New House, or repairing

ing an Old, do use a measuring Line. Now is the time come that God will have Antichrist's Church-state, Worship, Ordinances and all to be tried and examined by the Rule of God's Word? 2. When Antichristianism is at its height, Reformation cannot be without separation. *The Court which is without the Temple leave out*, i. e. Let it now be known by the measuring Line, that their Temple, Altar, Worship, and Worshippers are none of mine. 3. Antichristian Worship weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary is in God's Account Gentilism. *The outer Court is given to the Gentiles*, i. e. To such who though they profess Christianity, and that highly too, glorying that they are the only true Church, yet their Practice pure Gentilism, Antichristian, Rites and Ceremonies are most of them borrowed from Heathens. 4. Antichrists treading under the holy City, shall not be forever, it shall be for an appointed time; to wit, 42 Months, Verse 2. 5. In the height of Antichristianism, Christ shall have a competent number of such as shall give a faithful Testimony against him. *I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesie a thousand two hundred and threescore days cloathed in sackcloth*. Verse 3. The Sackcloth notes the meanness and lowness of their Condition; their number two, their paucity or fewness, yet competent, out of the Mouth of two or three witnesses shall every Truth be established: If this one thousand two hundred and threescore Days be the same with the Forty two Months, the time of Antichrists Reign, as it's very probable, reckoning Thirty Days to every Month, then by



by the two witnesses cannot be meant Magistracy and Ministry, because there have not been during the whole time of Antichrist's Reign, always some Magistrates, who, as such have given a Testimony for Christ against him; only that Christ had in all Ages and Countries a competent number, — as in *England, Wickliff*; in *Italy, Marsilius Patavinus*; in *Bohemia, John Husse* and *Jerom of Prague*; in *Saxony, Luther* and *Melanchton*; in *Helvetia, Zwinglius*; in *Basil, Oecolampadius*. — 6. They that have been called to witnessing-work, have had a special Anointing for the Work of their Day. These are the two Olive-Trees and the two Candlesticks standing before the God of the Earth, *vers. 4*. In allusion to the Lamps of the Candlestick in the Temple, under the Old Testament, which were kept burning by two Olive-Trees continually emptying themselves into them; so did Christ, out of his Fulness continually communicate abundant supplies of Grace and Gifts to his Servants. 7. Of all Men in the World Christs Martyrs or Witnesses, have the greatest interest in Heaven: If any Man hurte them, fire proceedeth out of their Mouth, and devoureth their Enemies. An allusion to what *Elias* did, *2 Kings 1. 10*. They have power to shut Heaven, that it Rain not in the Days of their Prophecy. To what *Elias* did, *1 Kings 17. 1. Jam. 5. 17*. They have power over Waters, to turn them into Blood, and to smite the Earth with all Plagues as often as they will. This alludes to what *Moses* and *Aaron* did in *Aegypt*, *vers. 5, 6*. i. e. They did denounce Wrath, and Prophesied of sore judgments that would befall

their Persecutors, and accordingly it came to pass, God made good their word; they were Wrestlers, and *Israels* indeed, Prevailers with God. *Luther* was so mighty in Prayer, that *quicquid voluit potuit*, he could do what he would with God.

From *vers. 7.* to *11.* you have a particular narrative of the slaying of the Witnesses, from thence to *15* of their Resurrection.

The time of the slaying of the Witnesses is, 1. Set down when they shall have finished their Testimony, or according to the Original, when they are about to finish their Testimony, [*verse 7.* i. e. towards the end of the 1260 Days, and towards the end of the Beasts 42 Months, which is not so to be understood, according to the great mistake of many, as if they should never after this, witness any more, nor Antichrist Reign any more, but only thus, They shall finish their Testimony in Sackeloath, and their Wilderness-State, and he shall never Reign again so as when he trod under the holy City, while the Church was in the Wilderness. 2. The person by whom they are slain, to wit the Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless Pit, *vers. 7.* i. e. The Pope and those that derive their Authority from him, as was shewn Chap. 9. 2, 3. Whether this slaying of them be the taking away their Natural lives only, or a Civil and Spiritual Death, depriving them of all privileges which they enjoyed, both as Men and Christians, in silencing Ministers, not giving them the liberty of their Consciences, in matters of Religion, according to the word, or something that comprehends both: I shall not curiously enquire, nor positively determine, only

by the latter I most incline to, for many were slain in their Bodies, and others suffered a Civil and Ecclesiastical Death, by Banishments, Excommunications, and otherwise. 2. The place where, is in the Street of the great City, which Spiritually is called *Sodom*, and *Ægypt*, vers. 8. *i. e.* In some places of the World, which do professedly own themselves to be of the Popes Dominions whose City is a second *Sodom*, for fulness of Bread, Idleness, and all manner of Uncleaness, and never did Old *Ægypt* abound in heathenish Idolatries, and oppress the People of God more than it. I like well enough of that conjecture that speaks of *Germany*, for it may be fitly called the Street of the great City, as being a principal part of the Roman Empire. The first thing that follows upon their being slain, is the great Inhumanity of Adversaries, *they would not suffer their Dead Bodies to be put in Graves, for three Days and a half, vers. 9.* For some short time they do pour forth all manner of opprobrious contempt upon them: The literal sense is not altogether to be rejected; the Papists would not suffer *Zwinglius's* Body to be Buried: So they served the Admiral of *France*, with many others in the *Parisian* Massacre, and in *Queen Mary's* Days, *Bucer's* Bones were raised, and burnt. 2. *They that dwell upon the Earth shall rejoyce over them, and make merry*, because they are rid of their Tormenters, *vers. 10.* This must be at such a time when the Popish party are insufferably proud, insulting over the slain Servants of God, that had tormented them with a plain Testimony against all their Abominations. *Mali cum in-*

*juriam facere non sinuntur, injuriam se accipere existimant.*

From this Narrative of the slaying of the Witnesses, learn these few Instructions. 1. Providence sometimes so orders it that God's Servants shall well near have finished their Work, before their Enemies can hurt them, that so their Testimony for Christ, may Live when they are dead and gone. 2. Reformation has been always attended with great Persecution. 3. A begun-work of Reformation may have such a sentence of Death pass upon it for a season, that to all probability it shall never have a revival. 4. Christ's Witnesses must expect nothing but Barbarity from Men of Popish Principles and Spirits. 5. It's no new thing to see wicked Men triumphantly insult over God's persecuted People. The 1. thing in the Narrative of the Resurrection of the Witnesses is the time thereof, *after three Days and a half*, vers. 11. Some short time, some apply this to *John Husse* and *Jerom*, who were condemned by the Council of *Constance*, that began, *Anno 1414, December the 8th.* and ended *1418. May 22.* Three Years and a half. 2. The means by which this was brought about, the Spirit of Life from God entred into them; they were stirred up by a Spirit of Zeal from God, to be lively and active in carrying on the work again. 3. Their posture, *they stood upon their feet*, vers. 11. Either the former slain Witnesses, I mean Civilly and Spiritually slain, or others of the same Principles, and Spirit, did openly appear in and for it again. 4. The effect, great fear fell upon all that saw them. 5. *They heard*

a voice from Heaven, saying, Come up hither, and accordingly they did ascend up to Heaven in a Cloud and their Enemies beheld them, vers. 12. The work of Reformation, and Separation, became now more glorious than ever before. 6. About the same time there was a great Earthquake and a tenth part of the City fell, vers. 13. i. e. When ever the Resurrection of the Witnesses is, the Lord shall wonderfully go forth in some remarkable Providences and Tremendous Judgments against the Roman Empire, to the great weakening thereof. Some apply it to the Bohemian War, after the sufferings of *Husse* and *Ferom*, where *Sigismundus* had great successes against the Antichristian Army. From all this learn these few instructions. 1. Commonly the sufferings of Reformers are short. 2. God's Spirit is the great Engine for carrying on God's Work. 3. Boldness in witness-bearing, is from God's Spirit, standing on their Feet, an open and a vowed Profession is from the Spirit of Life, from God. 4. Commonly wicked Men begin to be afraid, when they perceive that Persecution does but make God's People more bold, and God's Work to prosper the more. 5. Reformation and Separation from Antichristian Pollutions has a great brightness of illustrious Divine Glory upon it.

*Quest.* Is this Prophecy of the Slaying and Resurrection of the Witness yet fulfilled? And whereabouts are we of this Age, under the Sixth or Seventh Trumpet? Are the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days and forty two Month at an end or not?



For *Ans.* Let me premise a few things before I come to the thing it self. 1. This cannot be resolved, unless we are at some certainty where to fix the beginning of the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days, or the Churches wilderness-State, and of the forty two Months, or Antichrist's first Rise, whether from *Constantine*, immediately after the third Century, or from *Boniface's* time, *Anno 606*. I shall endeavour by and by to prove that both did commence from the time that did immediately follow after the first 300 Years. 2. It is more than probable, that the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days, and forty two Months are not to be understood literally, for just so many Natural Days and Astronomical Months, because matter of fact proves that Antichrist's Reign, and the Churches wilderness-State, has been already of a longer continuance, but figuratively and Mystically for Days of Years and Months of Years, according to, *Ezek. 4. 6*. Being an usual thing for Prophets thus to express themselves. These things premised, I answer in the affirmative, That this prophecy has had its accomplishment already, and the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days and forty two Months are expired; and that for these reasons.

1. If these Days and Months did commence from the time, immediately after the first three hundred Years, not from six hundred six, then this Prophecy is fulfilled, and the time past, but this is so — as may appear, 1. from *Rev. 12. 5, 6*. *As soon as the Woman brought forth a Man Child, which was caught up to God, she fled into the Wilderness.* i. e. Immediately after the Church

Church was delivered from Heathenish Persecutions, her wilderness-Estate, (the same with the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days in this 11th. Chap.) does begin. This is also hinted again to us from Rev. 12. 13, 14. *The Church is nourished in the Wilderness, for a time, times and half a time*, i. e. Three Years and a half; the same with one thousand two hundred and threescore Days and forty two Months. 2. from 2 Thess. 2. 7, 8. *The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth, will let, untill he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed* — i. e. As soon as ever the Heathen persecuting Emperors were removed, and not till then should it appear, what design the Devil had, to advance the Mystery of Iniquity. 3. Though it's true, the Church did not suffer from the great Antichrist, till six hundred and six; yet all that went before him, after *Constantine*, were petty Antichrists, only at first it was but young Days with Antichrist; in six hundred and six, he was of riper Years, the Churches sufferings were all that while of the same kind, *Majus & minus non variant speciem*, all that went before did but make way for him; and his predecessors Persecutions are all of them charged upon him, because he did practically approve of them. And this is the first thing that proves the foresaid Days and Months to be expired, and this Prophecy to be already fulfilled. 2. The inconsequences and absurdities that follow upon contrary opinions, which do assert that it's now a fulfilling, or the futuration of it, as a thing yet to come, make me to conclude that it is past. From what has been already said in opening the

Chap. it's clear, That it is not now a fulfilling.

1. This time cannot be exactly towards the end of the one thousand two hundred and threescore Days and forty two Months, and if it be, When did they begin? 2. Antichrist is not now at the highest, nor the Church at the lowest. 3. We cannot be said to be the Street of the great City, nor our times times of Popery. 4. We are not the first that laid the measuring-line to Antichrist's Temples, Altar and Worshipers. 5. This favours of Spiritual Pride, and can hardly be asserted, without reflecting upon the glorious Martyrs that have gone before us, as if they had not deserved the Names of Witnesses in respect of us, whereas indeed neither we, nor our sufferings, are worthy once to be named in way of comparison with them, and their sufferings: Some do fondly fancy, that nothing is to be witnessed to, but some one Notion of their own. 6. This would argue ingratitude and murmuring, as if we were still in the Wilderness, when indeed we have rather cause to bless God, saying, We bless thee, Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great Power, and hast reigned — The absurdities that follow upon asserting that this is yet to come, and that the foresaid Days and Months did begin with six hundred and six, are these, 1. By adding one thousand two hundred and threescore to six hundred and six, will be one thousand eight hundred and sixty six, about two hundred Years hence. 2. This may breed security in this present Age. 3. For two hundred Years Antichrist must still be a increasing to a greater height than ever. 4. Either all the glorious late Transactions throughout the World, have

have had no tendency to the prophesied ruin of Antichrist, or if they had, all that has been done, must be undone again, and all the Nations that have cast off the Popes supremacy, must Apostatize, and become worse than before: Is it probable, that God has brought so many out of *Ægypt*, to bring them back again? No verily. 5. If it be determined of God, that Antichrist's forty two Months shall not expire, nor his prophesied Reign begin till then, then it will be but in vain to attempt any thing against him all this while.

And this is the second ground proving the preterition of this Prophecy. There is but one more, to wit the harmony and concurrence of providential Events: Which this prophecy, understanding it according to the interpretation given, makes me conclude it is over; add 1260 to 300, and the number that results thence is 1560. Now let us inquire a little what state the Church was towards the concluding period of this time, or near thereupon. *Anno 1546*, in the War between the Emperor and Duke of *Saxony*, the Protestants were almost totally routed, the Prince himself imprisoned; Magistrates divested of their Robes; many Ministers banished and imprisoned for not taking the *Interim*; the Antichristian party insult exceedingly in sending great Guns and Prisoners, which they had taken as Trophies of an absolute Victory over *Lutberanism*: About the same time there was a great persecution in *France*, in the *Netherlands* under the Duke of *Alva*, of the *Waldenses* in *Provence*, *Anno 1545*. They of *Piedmont* by the Duke of *Savoy*: It is not unknown what was here in *Queen Mary's* days.

days. It is observed by some that within a few of these Years, the number of them that suffered for Christ, were 900000, and this may relate to the slaying of the Witnesses; and as for the Resurrection, about 1559, the Work of Reformation had a great reviving in Germany. At a Diet of the Empire at *Ausburg*, by public Authority, the Protestants had free liberty to make Profession of their Religion, without prejudice to their Estates, and civil Privileges; about the same time Reformation had a reviving in Scotland. In France under Charles the 9th, Anno 1560. Queen Mary Reigned about 1554, and died some five Years after, and Queen Elizabeth brought glorious days to Protestantism in general, in respect of the *Marian* days. Besides all these Arguments, my own observation of the Acts of Providence at this day, do more and more confirm me in this perswasion, however if any can shew me more convincing Reasons to the contrary, I hope through Grace I shall not be found pertinacious.

I cannot slightly pass over so material a point as this is without drawing some practical Inferences from it by way of Application.

1st. For Instruction. 1. The longest Day that ever was had an end: Antichrist's forty two Months have their period. 2. When Persecutors are at the highest, then their Downfall draws nigh; *Nihil violentum durabile*. 3. O that all the Sons of Wickedness would be wise, and instructed from what has befallen others, to tremble and fear God because of his Judgments. 4. Christ's Witnesses do carry on his Work by their Sufferings, as well as Services,  
Passive



passive Obedience is as acceptable to God, and useful to others, as Active. 5. No Cause of Christ, sealed with a bloody Testimony, shall ever be quite lost. 6. The Reformed Churches that have in any measure cast off the Yoak of Antichristianism, are highly to be esteem'd of; tho' it was never intended of God that Reformation should stand at what it did begin, either in Doctrine, Worship or Discipline; yet the state of the Primitive Reformers was a Heaven upon Earth in comparison of what their Predecessors state was.

More particularly from these things we may venture to make some sober conjecture concerning the Dispensation this Age is under.

1. If this Prophecy of the Witnesses be fulfilled about an hundred Years ago, then we are now under the 7th Trumpet, which contemporizeth with their Resurrection, or does at least follow immediately upon it. 2. The Work of Reformation is not to begin; the Right-hand of the most High has already laid the Foundation. 3. Antichrist has been already at the highest, and is now a going down the Wind; all the endeavours of Men and Devils shall not be able to raise him again to what once he was, nor to support or keep him from falling; tho' this and two or three Nations more should Apostatize to Popery more than ever, yet it's nothing contrary to my assertion, unless *Bohemia, Switzerland, Helvetia, Hungary, Holland*, and all in *Germany, France, Sweden*, and other parts, do professedly return to *Rome* again, and become more Idolatrous than before, which shall never be. 4. We shall never know such another slaying of Witnesses as this. 1. Those were in the Wilderness,

Wilderness, the suffering Witnesses of after Ages shall be out of the Wilderness. 2. They were then in Sackcloth, after Ages shall never know such a mournful Condition. 3. They suffered before the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, which is under the 7th Trumpet, *ch. 11.* there was not before them any considerable visible Separation from the Church of Rome; not so with us. 4. There were but two then, *i. e.* a few in comparison of what shall be after, if we suffer for Christ now, we shall have many Co-partners. 5. That very work of God which has been begun amongst us, I mean Reformation in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, shall somewhere or other in God's own time and way, go on and prosper, maugre all opposition.

Lastly, The consideration and belief of this Truth, that the Witnesses are slain and risen, may teach us how to demean our selves in this Day, 1. Towards God. 2. Enemies. 3. One another. 4. In respect of our selves.

Towards God.

1. We are Monsters for Ingratitude, if we do not trumpet forth his Praises aloud, for bringing us forth in such a glorious Age and Time; certainly if our Godly Ancestors had seen and heard what we now do, especially they that Lived about an hundred Years ago, would have said, Now the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ is Come. 2. Be very Patient under all the Corrections and Chastisements of this Good God. 1. Your Sufferings are but a Fleabite to the Sufferings of others that have gone before you. 2. Your Punishments are still less than your Sin's deserts. 3. Consider what the Glorious Son of God hath suffered for you, and

and yours is nothing. 4. It's a most glorious, honourable and advantageous thing to suffer for Christ in a righteous Cause; See 1 Pet. 4. 13, 14, 15, 16. with several others formerly commended to you. 5. Your sufferings may be sharp for a Season, but short. 6. Your Sufferings after a begun Work of Reformation, are for the Trial of your Faith and Patience, 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. Heb. 10. 36, 37, 38. Rev. 14. 12. Here is the Patience of the Saints; here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus. 7. The issue of your Sufferings will be Glorious to your selves, but dreadful to your Enemies, 1 Pet. 4. 17. 2 Thess. 1. 4, 5, 6.

**Towards Enemies.**

1. Look upon them as the Rod of God upon you for your sins of Ingratitude, Earthly-mindedness, Carnality, Pride, Self-seeking Hypocrisy, Formality, &c. 2. If your Enemies are any kin to Antichrist, you need not, you ought not to fear them, with a slavish fear, for they are falling and going down, even when they seem to rise. 3. Seeing you can in some measure guess at the issue and event of things; pity and pray for Persecutors, as knowing what that Wrath that abides them, is, unless they repent. 4. Abhor the very thoughts of a sinful compliance with any Antichristian pollutions and abominations in God's Worship, if you had lived a hundred Years ago, there had been some colourable excuse for your Conformity and Compliance, but now there can be none, 1 John 5. ult. *My little Children keep your selves from Idols.*

Towards one another.

1. Love and Honour all under what Name or Notion soever that have but their Faces *Zion* ward, especially such as have Suffer'd, do now, or may yet Suffer for the Word of God and for the Testimony of Jesus; the rebukes of God upon Professors, call aloud to them to lay aside their sinful differences and divisions which have undone them, and to love one another not in Word but in Deed, with a pure heart fervently: You have all common Enemies, and why you should not love one another I know not. 2. If any that bear the Name of Christ should solicit you to joyn with them in any sinful irregular course to work your Deliverance, hearken not to them; God himself does now stand engaged to go on with that which is God's Work indeed, and therefore he needs not your hand nor help.

In respect of your selves,

1. Tho' the great slaying of the Witnesses be past, yet each of us ought to be always prepared for the greatest of Tryals, because no particular Person can at any time promise himself an absolute exemption from Sufferings from this time forth to the end of the World; and it stands with reason it should be so, for the Destruction of Antichrist being gradual, by seven several Vials; when one Vial has done its work, there is still something more of him to be destroyed, and his utter Destruction will not be till the end of the World, how can it then be otherwise but so long as he has any power or being he will be making some bustle against those that oppose; Some are of opinion that even after the conversion of the *Jews*, which

which will be a most glorious time, the Church will have great troubles and that for forty five Years together, *Daniel* 12. Begin. Nay, and after the 1000 Years, *Rev.* 20. 1. They shall be in as great trouble as ever they knew from the beginning of the World to that Day, which will be immediately before the coming of the Son of God to Judgment. Many have strongly fancied, that the time was come that they should have nothing to do but to rule the World; the Lord in mercy convince them of their mistakes; certainly a glorious Day may be look'd for before this World be at an end; but it is so called comparatively, *i.e.* in respect of our present Day and Times that are past. 2. This calls aloud upon us to be deeply humbled before the Lord, because of our manifold sins and unsuitableness of Spirit to the Work of our Day: We may well say thus, Is the Work of Reformation now upon the Wheel of Providence? And is Antichrist a declining? Ah, how does the Work stick and go on so slowly? Sure it's my Sins and others that retards and hinders it. When I consider the great Distempers of the Spirits of all sorts of Professors, I do not at all wonder at what has befallen us. 3. Let us therefore, by all means, labour for such a Spirit as may suit with the Work of our Day; a Spirit of Understanding to know what is God's Work, and what ours; to know what is Antichristian, and what not—a Spirit of Wisdom to find out such Holy and Righteous ways as may most conduce for the carrying on of this Work; a Spirit of Humility, Mortification, Self-denial, Sincerity, Faithfulness, holy Courage and Boldness, a Spirit



Spirit of Prayer, Faith and Zeal, for God's Glory.

They that would yet know more particularly under what dispensation we now are, and what hereafter may be expected, must study well the 7th Trumpet, *Rev.* 11. End, and the seven Vials, Chap. 16. I will but just give a very short hint at each of the Vials, and so shut up all. The 1st is poured out upon that which is the Earth in the Antichristian World, *i.e.* the Fundamentals of the Popish Kingdom are struck at, and such Doctrines upon which the whole structure of Antichristianism is built, without which it cannot stand, no more than the Fabrick of this Universe without the Earth. *Erasmus* says of *Luther*, that he committed two unpardonable faults, in meddling with the Popes Mitre and the Monks Bellies. Antichrist's Ruine is the Churches Rise; the confuting of their Antichristian Doctrines did clear up the principal Fundamental Truths of the Gospel. 2. Upon the Sea, *i.e.* Their Worship and Ordinances by which they trade on with another. The first Reformers were so taken up with the clearing up of the Doctrinal part of the Gospel, that they could not have the while to think of matters of Worship, which was done to some purpose after in the Council of *Trent*, by *Chemnitius* and others. 3. Is upon the Rivers and Fountains of Waters, *i.e.* The Romish Clergy: It's by them the Christians of the Antichristian World are moistened; they come from the Sea, and run into it; they were Originally bred by the Romish Religion, and are the great supporters of it; they are Wells of Water, *2 Pet.* 2. And *Rev.* 16. 5, 6, 7. It's they that have shed the Blood of

Saints

Saints and Prophets. According to this interpretation these three Vials are at least in some measure poured forth already, only more may be yet expected. 4. Upon the Sun, *i. e.* Either some that are eminent for upholding Antichrist in his civil power and jurisdiction, such as the King of *Spain*, the Pope's Eldest Son, or the House of *Austria*, or something that's a great light to them in respect of their Ecclesiastical State, such as is the whole Body of their Canon Law — or both these. 5. Is upon the seat of the Beast; this may be understood of the Destruction of *Rome* or the Pope's Principality; as the 5th Trumpet set him upon his Throne, the 5th Vial shall Dethrone him. 6. Dries up the great River *Euphrates*, *i. e.* Destroys the Great *Turk* and his Empire, which shall make way for the Kings of the *East* to go up into their own Land, *i. e.* Then shall the *Jews* be Converted, the Glory of which time I have discoursed at large in my Treatise of the Fifth Monarchy. 7. and last puts an end to all. Antichrist is not only utterly ruined, but also *Gog* and *Magog*, all sorts of Christs, and the Churches Enemies. The Lambs Marriage Day is solemnized before God, Angels and Men, and his Spouse is caught up to himself to be with the Lord for ever: The Spirit and the Bride saith, Come, even so come quickly, Lord Jesus, *Amen.* And let every Soul say, *Amen.* Truly God is good to *Israel*, and to such as are of a clean heart.

*Gloria perpetuo sit tribuenda Deo.*

**F I N I S.**



God's Goodness  
TO HIS  
ISRAEL  
*In All Ages.*

Being the Substance of some

SERMONS,  
ON

PSALM Lxxiii. 1.

*Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as  
are of a clean heart.*

By J. F. Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON,

Printed for Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and  
Three Crowns, in Cheapside, near Mercers-  
Chappel: 1700.

ERRATA.

**P**Age 3. line 2. read exalting. l. 27. add far. p. 5. l. 14.  
 r. for. p. 8. l. 24. r. poverty. l. 25. r. reproach. p. 14.  
 l. 24. r. pitched. p. 16. l. 13. r. chargeable. p. 20. l. 4. r.  
 Olive. p. 22. l. last, r. you. p. 36. l. 1. r. inxta. p. 50. l. 14.  
 r. given. p. 54. l. 23. r. Earthly. p. 57. l. 8. r. Trumpets. p.  
 57. l. last. for one r. none.





God's Goodness  
TO HIS  
ISRAEL  
In all Ages.

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Psalm LXXIII. i.

*Truly God is good to Israel, and to such as are of a clean heart.*

**T**HEY that will be at pains to peruse this Psalm throughout, will easily perceive under what a sad temptation the Psalmist (whether *Asaph* or *David*, is not material) had been at this time, having observed how the wicked prospered, and what miseries the godly did undergo; he did begin to conclude that it were no great matter whether he followed the ways of godliness any more; or whether he turned Profane and Atheistical: v. 2, 3. *As for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* v. 13, 14. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long*  
B have

## 2 God's Goodness to his Israel

have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. While thus he was conflicting with the temptation, the Lord directed him to the use of a blessed means, whereby he came to be better instructed; *He went into the Sanctuary* (i. e. he consulted the Oracles of God, he searched the Records of Heaven, the Holy Scriptures, he was diligent in the practice of all duties of Temple-worship, then in use; he consulted with God and his Spirit, and Jesus Christ, the Sanctuary was the Type and he the Antitype) and then he could say, *Surely thou hast set them in slippery places; thou castest them down into destruction; how are they brought into desolation, as in a moment? they are utterly consumed with terrors, as a dream, when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, shalt thou despise their image.* Having now overcome the temptation, he pens this Psalm, an excellent Prospective Glass for the Church and People of God in all ages; wherein they may see, 1. The variety and wonderfulness of the Dispensations of Gods Providence towards his Creatures. 2. That its common and ordinary, for wicked men, to have worldly prosperity. 3. That oftentimes, as to outward things, Saints are of all men the most miserable; so 1 Cor 15. to the end, Psal. 44. 22. *We are accounted all day long as sheep for the slaughter.* 4. That they that are most spiritual, are liable to temptations, and in a readines to comply therewith, and therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. 5. One of the best means under heaven to get victory over a temptation, is to go into the Sanctuary, taking it in the fore-mentioned sense. Lastly, Tempted ones taking this course to wait upon God, in the use of appointed means, have sometime or other a glorious issue; and not only so, but they prove the most choice and excellent, the most humble and lowly,

ly, the most affectionate and loving, the most Christ exalting and Soul edifying Christians; they improve their temptations, their Exercises under them, and their issues out of them to some purpose for the glory of God, the good of their own souls, and the spiritual advantage of others. This improvement the Psalmist made, is worthy of our observation. 1. He is now able with a holy asseveration to attest to this truth which he did so unbelievably question, *Truly God is good to Israel.* 2. He bemoans his brutishness, stupidity, and atheistical ignorance, v. 22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee.* 3. He did attribute his preservation from yielding to temptation, to the divine supports of the free grace of God only; v. 23. *Nevertheless thou art continually with me, thou hast holden me by thy right hand.* 4. By the mercy received, he is engaged to act a fiducial dependance upon God as long as he lives; v. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* 5. He has more sublimated, raised, and elevated affections than ever; v. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, there is none in all the earth I desire besides thee.* Lastly, He is fully grounded, settled, and established in this truth, that let the wicked prosper a thousand times over, yet we shall be to them in conclusion, v. 27. *For to they that are firm thee, shall perish; thou hast destroyed (it's as sure as if thou hadst already done it) all them that go a whoring from thee:* and on the contrary, the frowns of Providence on Gods people, shall never make him out of love with holiness: I shall still say, *It is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord, that I may declare all thy works.*

Thus you see how the scope of the whole Psalm does so much conduce to the clearing of what is contained in the first verse, *Truly God is good to Israel*. Some read the first word, *Alibough*, or, *Yet surely*, i. e. Though once I was under a strong temptation, the Devil and my own carnal heart, would have perswaded me that God did not care for his people: Notwithstanding that to sense and reason, providences do often speak forth the happiness of the wicked, and the godlies miseries; though this be the Opinion of the vulgar and common sort of people, yet now I can set my seal to this truth, *God is good to Israel*, with a *surely*, a *truly*, a *verily*. In the words there are these two things that need explication; 1. Who are the *Israel* here spoken of. 2. What we are to understand by those that *are of a clean heart*.

For the first, *Israel* was that Name which God gave unto *Jacob* after he had wrestled with the angel and prevailed; Gen. 32. 28. *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*; Hos. 12. 13. The reason of the change of Name was no doubt for honour's sake. Sometimes it signifies all the posterity of *Jacob*; Isa. 48. 1. *Hear this O house of Jacob, which art called by the name of Israel*; Rom. 9. 4. 2 Cor. 11. 23. Phil. 3. 5. Sometimes for the Church under the Old Testament, consisting of the posterity of *Jacob*, and Gentile Proselytes; Psal. 68. 35. *The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his people*; and 125. last. Joh. 1. 49. Rom. 9. 6. For the Christian Church under the New Testament converted to the faith of Christ; Gal. 6. 16. 1 Cor. 10. 18. *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward*

ward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God: Rom. 2. 28, 29. When this Psalm was first penned, by Israel here spoken of, the Old Testament Church were principally understood, but in our treating of this Subject, we are not to restrict it to them only.

2. That we may the better know who those of a clean heart are, this distinction is necessary:

1. There is a Legal cleanness of heart, which is a perfect and compleat purity, according to what the Law requires. 2. There is an Evangelical or Gospel cleanness of heart, which is, 1. A godly sorrow and humiliation ~~of~~ heart-uncleanness. 2. A holy detestation, hatred, and abhorrence of every sin. 3. A constant endeavour every day more and more to be rid of sin. 4. A sincere cordial love to holiness and heart purity. 5. A fervent and earnest praying with David, Psal. 51. *Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.* 6. An unfeigned faith, whereby a humbled soul, does notwithstanding of the guilt and filth of sin, lay hold on Christ for Justification and Sanctification. It's of this later and not the former, the assertion in the Text is verified; Psal. 52. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man whose sins is forgiven, and whose transgression is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guil.*

By this time you may perceive that my Text points at these three things: 1. The goodness of God here mentioned, is not that common providential bounty whereof the whole Creation are made partakers, but the specialties of Gods love and favour. 2. Though there are many titular Christians



Christians that go under the name of Church-members, Saints, and Professors; yet the specialty of Love, is the peculiar privilege and portion of upright-hearted ones only. 3. It is a most infallible, certain, and undoubted truth, that God is good to his Church and people, especially such as are sincere souls amongst them. O how sweet is it to speak of this goodness of God, but how much more sweet to taste of it: O its sweet to know it, but much more sweet to feel it experimentally, and to have a lively sense of his goodness to my own soul in particular.

For the opening of this more fully, I shall propose this method, 1. Give some few Scripture-proofs of this truth, God is good to his people. 2. Some demonstrations thereof, from what has been common to his people in all ages. 3. From some particular blessings bestowed upon the Jews under the Old Testament. 4. What the goodness of God was to the Gospel-Church, as in contradiction to the Jews. 5. What were the peculiar blessings of God to the Primitive Church, in Christ and the Apostles days. 6. Wherein the goodness of God appeared to the Church for the first Three hundred years after the death of Christ and his Apostles. 7. What from the first rise of Antichrist, till he came to his full height, and during his reign. 8. What the good providence of God is like to be from the first remarkable beginning of Antichrists ruin, to the time and period of his utter destruction, from the beginning of the work of Reformation, to the end of the World.

Here's Work enough carved out for me to speak, and you to hear of; we may well say, Who is sufficient for these things? We might be greatly discouraged, even at our first entrance upon it, were

It not for this one thing, That God with whom we have to do, and whose work we are about, is of infinite goodness, grace, mercy, love, and bounty, abundant in goodness and truth; *he giveth liberally, and upbraideth no man*, Jam. 1. 5.

First, For Scripture proofs take these few instead of many, Psal. 31. 19. *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!* Zech. 3. last ver. Psal. 103. 11, 12, 13. 15, 16, 17, &c. Psal. 107. this is four or five times reiterated, *O that men would praise the Lord, for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men*; and Psal. 136. this is 26 times repeated, *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever*. and 145. 7, 8, 9. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy; the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Secondly, The consideration of such blessings as are common to the upright hearted ones in all ages, is a farther demonstration of this truth, and they are these: 1. There's none of them, but it is upon the heart of God to do them good before the foundation of the world; Eph. 1. 4, 5, 6. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 2. That unspeakable and unparallel'd mercy of God in promising and sending his dear Son to work redemption for his people, is a confirmation of this. Job. 3. 16 *God solved the world* — 3. There's none of Gods peculiar ones, but in due time have been effectually called from darkness to light; he takes the heirs of hell, wrath, and damnation, and adopts them for his own children; 1 Job. 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love and goodness this is.* 4. Pardon of sin is that that all the people of God have

have been partakers of; *Micah 7. 18. O who is a God like unto our God, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage! Isa. 43. 25. Ezek. 36. 22.* 5. All such have had the soul-saving and sanctifying graces of the spirit bestowed upon them; *2 Pet. 1. 4.* 6. They have had Ordinances and means, whereby grace and all spiritual blessings may be communicated to them; *Psal. 147. 19, 20. He sheweth his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any Nation —* 7. Whatever blessings they have, all is by the tenure of a Covenant of Grace; *2 Cor. 1. 20. All promises are Yea and Amen in Christ to them that believe.* O the never-enough-admired goodness of this God, that has condescended so far, as by a voluntary Contract and Covenant to make himself a Debtor to such undeserving wretches! *Psal. 34. 3. O come let us magnifie the goodness of the Lord together!* 8. God is so good, that he has in all ages furnished his people with what he knew to be most convenient for them; if the light of his countenance was best for them, that they had; if the joys and consolations of the Holy Ghost, or the hidings of his face — if poverties, if reproaches, if Ordinances, or if sometimes the want of Ordinances, was good for them; if persecution, or deliverance from it — He has sanctified every state and condition, making all things work for their good; *Rom. 8. 28. in one word, Psal. 84. 11. The Lord is a Sun and a Shield, he giveth grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly: and 37. 37. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, behold the end of that man is peace Isa. 64. 4. Psal. 40. 12. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works, which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to me-ward; they cannot be reckoned*

up in order before thee, if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Thirdly, The consideration of the eminent acts of God's gracious Providence towards the Church of the Jews, under the Old Testament, is a proof of this truth; some few whereof are these. 1. Of all Nations under Heaven them only he separated, to be a holy People for himself. Deut. 7. 6, 7, 8. *Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people for himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth; the Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because ye were more in number than any other people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loveth you.*

2. That Egyptian Deliverance, so miraculously wrought for them, was an eminent act of God's good Providence to them, (and that in these respects. 1. He furnished them with a General every way fit for that Expedition, Ps. 105. 26. *He sent Moses his servant and Aaron whom he had chosen.* 2. He inflicted ten several tremendous Plagues and fearful Judgments on their persecuting and oppressive Enemies, because they would not allow them liberty to worship God according to the Command of God and their own Consciences. Ps. 105. 27. That of the cutting off all the First-Born of their Adversaries in one night, when the destroying Angel pass'd over them, is memorable; as also their being in Goshen, a Land of Light for three days together, when the other were in Darknefs. 3. In spite of all Opposers, they had one very glorious Sacramental Passover-day, before they were



brought forth. 4. He did greatly enrich them with Ear-rings and Jewels of their cruel Task-masters, *Exod. 22. 36.* 5. While they were surrounded with the Red Sea, on the one hand, and Pharaoh's Army on the other, you know what great Salvation he wrought for them. *Exod. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* *O sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.*

3. The many signal passages of his Providence towards them in the Wilderness, do demonstrate this Truth, Truly God is good to Israel. 1. He sweetned the bitter Waters of *Marah* for them, *Exod. 15. 23, 24, 25.* 2. He Rained Manna from Heaven upon them, and gave them Quails to eat, even when in a pettish murmuring Humour, they said unto *Moses* and *Aaron*, would to God we had Died by the Hand of the Lord in the Land of *Aegypt*, when we sat by the flesh-Pots, and when we did eat Bread to the full, for ye have brought us forth into the Wilderness to kill the whole Assembly with Hunger. 3. When they Thirsted and had no Drink, *He opened the Rock, and the Waters gushed out, they ran in the dry places like a River, Psal. 105. 41.* 4. Through the prevalency of *Moses's* Prayer, they obtained a glorious Victory over the *Amalekites*, *Aaron* and *Hur*, holding up his Hands, for which an Altar was erected to the Lord as an eternal Monument of that Mercy, *Exod. 17. end.* 5. They had the Pillar of the Cloud by Day to keep them from the violence and scorching Heat of the Sun, and the Pillar of Fire by Night to shelter them from the cold thereof, and to lead them on their way in the Dark, *Ps.*



105. 39. 6. They had the Law in a most solemn way and manner given forth from Mount Sinai, *Exod. 20.* O happy is that People that's under a Theocracy, and who are governed only by that Law which is purely Divine: The Law Moral, did in a general way teach them their Duty both to God and Man. The Ceremonial did teach them more particularly what to give unto God, and the judicial Law did inform them how they ought to walk one towards another as Members of such a Body Politick, Nation, Kingdom, or Commonwealth. 7. The Lord did institute Tabernacle-Worship first in the Wilderness: Better be in the Wilderness with God's Ordinances, than in *Ægypt* without them. 8. When they proved Idolatrous in erecting a Molten Calf, to be a visible representation of God's marching on before them, upon their Repentance and *Moses's* Prayer, God was graciously pleased to pardon their Sin, *Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13, 14.* 9. All that Forty Years they were in the Wilderness, they had no need to renew their Shoes nor Garments. 10. When they were stung with fiery Serpents, they had a brazen Serpent erected, as an Ordinance of divine Institution for their Remedy and Cure, *Numb. 21. 9.* Lastly, Most of all these things, their Manna, Water out of the Rock, Tabernacles, high Priest, Ark, Sacrifices, Altars, Pillar of the Cloud, and Fire, and the brazen Serpent, were Typical representations of Jesus Christ, and visible Signs of his Presence amongst them. I was lately very much taken with the Reading of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Chapters of *Numbers*, where after numbring the Children of *Israel*, they are Ranked